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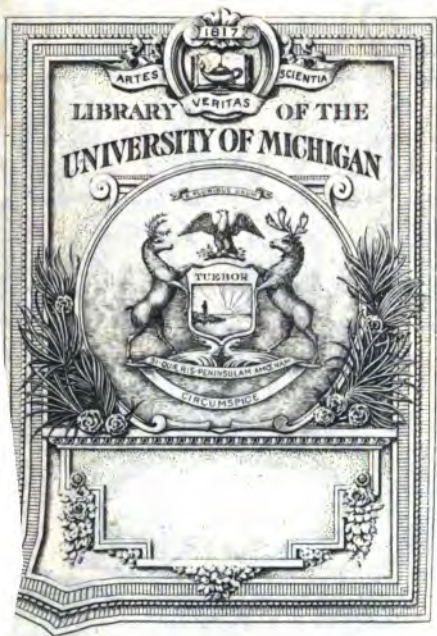
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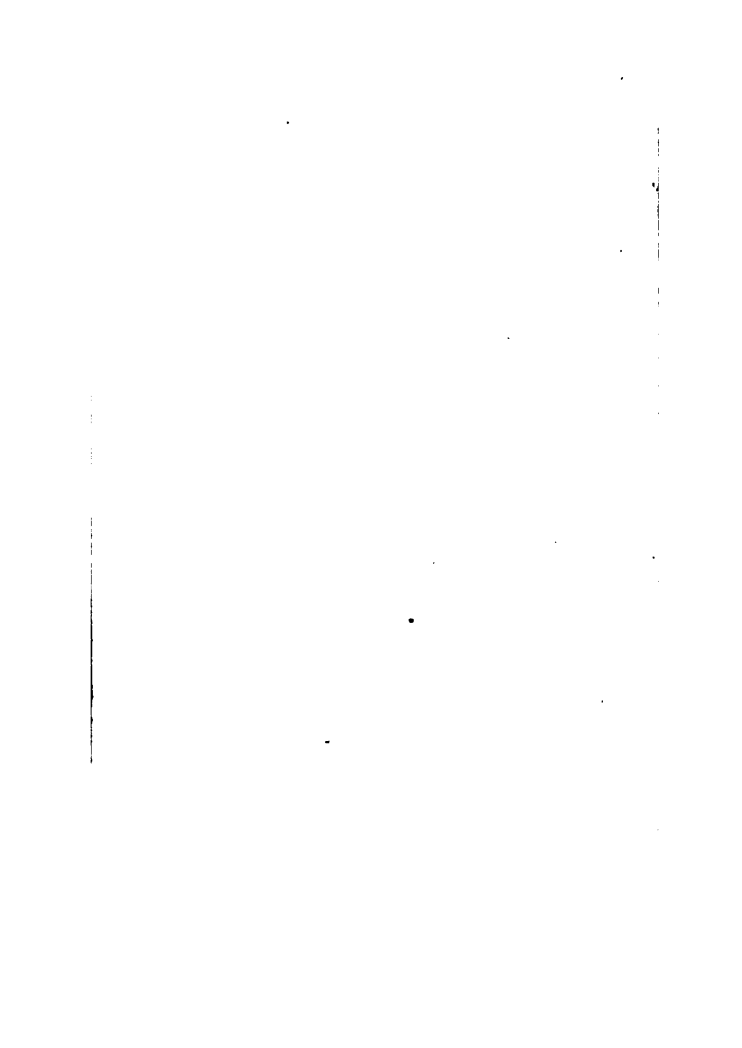
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EARLY POEMS

BY

33633

VILLIAM WORDSWORTH



LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

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GLASGOW, MANCHESTER, AND NEW YORK

1889

If thou indeed derive thy light from Heaven,
Then, to the measure of that heaven-born light
Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content,—
The stars pre-eminent in magnitude,
And they that from the zenith dart their beams
(Visible though they be to half the earth,
Though half a sphere be conscious of their brightness)
Are yet of no diviner origin,
No purer essence, than the one that burns,
Like an untended watch-fire, on the ridge
Of some dark mountain ; or than those which seem
Humbly to hang, like twinkling winter lamps
Among the branches of the leafless trees ;
All are the undying offspring of one Sire :
Then, to the measure of the light vouchsafed,
Shine, Poet ! in thy place, and be content.

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN the following pages I have endeavoured to give the best of Wordsworth's earlier short poems. They are arranged, as nearly as can be ascertained, in the chronological order of their composition ; the date of each poem being appended.

The earlier texts have been followed, except in a few cases where the later readings were preferable.

The present selection will, I trust, confirm the general opinion that Wordsworth's early work is his best. All the poems here given were composed between the Poet's sixteenth and fiftieth years ; and the greater portion of them between the years 1798 and 1808. Wordsworth was born 1770 ; died 1850.

J. R. TUTIN.

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EARLY POEMS.



EXTRACT

FROM THE CONCLUSION OF A POEM, COMPOSED UPON
LEAVING SCHOOL.

DEAR native regions, I foretell,
From what I feel at this farewell,
That, whereso'er my steps shall tend,
And whenso'er my course shall end,
If in that hour a single tie
Survive of local sympathy,
My soul will cast the backward view,
The longing look alone on you.

Thus, when the sun, prepared for rest,
Hath gained the precincts of the west,
Though his departing radiance fail
To illuminate the hollow vale,
A lingering light he fondly throws
On the dear hills where first he rose.

1786.

*"CALM IS ALL NATURE AS A RESTING
WHEEL."*

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The kine are couched upon the dewy grass ;
The horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is cropping audibly his later meal :
Dark is the ground ; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, comes to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food ; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My friends ! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain :
Oh ! leave me to myself ; nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.
1786?



REMEMBRANCE OF COLLINS.

COMPOSED UPON THE THAMES, NEAR RICHMOND.

GLIDE gently, thus for ever glide,
O Thames ! that other bards may see
As lovely visions by thy side
As now, fair river ! come to me.
Oh, glide, fair stream, for ever so !
Thy quiet soul on all bestowing,

Till all our minds for ever flow,
As thy deep waters now are flowing.

Vain thought !—Yet be as now thou art,
That in thy waters may be seen
The image of a poet's heart—
How bright, how solemn, how serene !
Such as did once the poet bless,
Who murmuring here a later ditty,
Could find no refuge from distress
But in the milder grief of pity.

Now let us, as we float along,
For *him* suspend the dashing oar,
And pray that never child of song
May know that poet's sorrows more.
How calm ! how still ! the only sound
The dripping of the oar suspended !
The evening darkness gathers round,
By virtue's holiest Powers attended.

1789.



LINES

Left upon a seat in a Yew-tree, which stands near the
Lake of Esthwaite, on a desolate part of the shore,
commanding a beautiful prospect.

NAY, traveller ! rest. This lonely Yew-tree
stands
Far from all human dwelling : what if here

No sparkling rivulet spread the verdant herb ?
What if these barren boughs the bee not loves ?
Yet, if the wind breathe soft, the curling waves,
That break against the shore, shall lull thy
mind
By one soft impulse saved from vacancy.

Who he was
That piled these stones, and with the mossy
sod
First covered o'er, and taught this aged Tree
With its dark arms to form a circling bower
I well remember.—He was one who owned
No common soul. In youth by science nursed,
And led by Nature into a wild scene
Of lofty hopes, he to the world went forth
A favoured being, knowing no desire
Which genius did not hallow,—'gainst the taint
Of dissolute tongues, and jealousy, and hate,
And scorn,—against all enemies prepared,
All but neglect. The world, for so it thought,
Owed him no service : wherefore he at once
With indignation turned himself away,
And with the food of pride sustained his soul
In solitude.—Stranger ! these gloomy boughs
Had charms for him ; and here he loved to sit,
His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper :
And on these barren rocks, with fern and
heath,

And juniper and thistle, sprinkled o'er,
Fixing his downcast eye, he many an hour
A morbid pleasure nourished, tracing here
An emblem of his own unfruitful life :
And, lifting up his head, he then would gaze
On the more distant scene,—how lovely 'tis
Thou seest,—and he would gaze till it became
Far lovelier, and his heart could not sustain
The beauty, still more beauteous ! Nor, that
time,

When Nature had subdued him to herself,
Would he forget those beings, to whose minds;
Warm from the labours of benevolence,
The world, and human life, appeared a scene
Of kindred loveliness, then he would sigh
With mournful joy, to think that others felt
What he must never feel : and so, lost man !
On visionary views would fancy feed,
Till his eye streamed with tears. In this deep
vale

He died,—this seat his only monument.

If thou be one whose heart the holy forms
Of young imagination have kept pure,
Stranger ! henceforth be warned ; and know
that pride,

Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness ; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used ; that thought with him

Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works, one who might
move

The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful, ever. O be wiser, thou !
Instructed that true knowledge leads to love,
True dignity abides with him alone
Who, in the silent hour of inward thought,
Can still suspect, and still revere himself,
In lowliness of heart.

1795.



THE REVERIE OF POOR SUSAN.

At the corner of Wood Street, when daylight
appears,
Hangs a thrush that sings loud, it has sung
for three years :
Poor Susan has passed by the spot, and has
heard
In the silence of morning the song of the bird.
'Tis a note of enchantment ; what ails her ?
She sees
A mountain ascending, a vision of trees ;
Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury
glide,
And a river flows on through the vale of
Cheapside.

Green pastures she views in the midst of the
dale,

Down which she so often has tripped with her
pail ;

And a single small cottage, a nest like a dove's,
The one only dwelling on earth that she loves.

She looks, and her heart is in heaven : but
they fade,

The mist and the river, the hill and the shade :
The stream will not flow, and the hill will not
rise,

And the colours have all passed away from
her eyes.

1797.



WE ARE SEVEN.

———A SIMPLE Child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death ?

I met a little cottage Girl :
She was eight years old, she said ;
Her hair was thick with many a curl
That clustered round her head.

She had a rustic, woodland air,
And she was wildly clad :

Her eyes were fair, and very fair ;
Her beauty made me glad.

“ Sisters and brothers, little Maid,
How many may you be ? ”

“ How many ? Seven in all,” she said,
And wondering looked at me.

“ And where are they ? I pray you tell.”
She answered, “ Seven are we ;
And two of us at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea.

“ Two of us in the churchyard lie,
My sister and my brother ;
And, in the churchyard cottage, I
Dwell near them with my mother.”

“ You say that two at Conway dwell,
And two are gone to sea,
Yet ye are seven !—I pray you tell,
Sweet Maid, how this may be.”

Then did the little Maid reply,
“ Seven boys and girls are we ;
Two of us in the churchyard lie,
Beneath the churchyard tree.”

“ You run about, my little Maid,
Your limbs they are alive ;
If two are in the churchyard laid,
Then ye are only five.”

" Their graves are green, they may be seen,"
The little Maid replied,

" Twelve steps or more from my mother's
door,

And they are side by side.

" My stockings there I often knit,
My kerchief there I hem ;
And there upon the ground I sit—
I sit and sing to them.

" And often after sunset, Sir,
When it is light and fair,
I take my little porringer,
And eat my supper there.

" The first that died was little Jane ;
In bed she moaning lay,
Till God released her of her pain ;
And then she went away.

" So in the churchyard she was laid ;
And when the grass was dry,
Together round her grave we played
My brother John and I.

" And when the ground was white with snow,
And I could run and slide,
My brother John was forced to go,
And he lies by her side."

"How many are you then," said I,
If they two are in heaven?"
The little maiden did reply,
"O Master! we are seven."

"But they are dead; those two are dead!
Their spirits are in heaven!"
'Twas throwing words away: for still
The little Maid would have her will,
And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

1798.



THE COMPLAINT

OF A FORSAKEN INDIAN WOMAN.

When a Northern Indian, from sickness, is unable to continue his journey with his companions, he is left behind, covered over with deer-skins, and is supplied with water, food, and fuel, if the situation of the place will afford it. He is informed of the track which his companions intend to pursue, and if he is unable to follow or overtake them, he perishes alone in the desert, unless he should have the good fortune to fall in with some other tribes of Indians. The females are equally, or still more, exposed to the same fate. See that very interesting work, Hearne's "Journey from Hudson's Bay to the Northern Ocean." In the high northern latitudes, as the same writer informs us, when the northern lights vary their position in the air, they make a rustling and a crackling noise, as alluded to in the following poem.

I.

"BEFORE I see another day,
Oh, let my body die away !
In sleep I heard the northern gleams ;
The stars were mingled with my dreams ;
In rustling conflict through the skies,
I heard, I saw the flashes drive,
And yet they are upon my eyes,
And yet I am alive ;
Before I see another day,
Oh, let my body die away !

II.

My fire is dead : it knew no pain ;
Yet is it dead, and I remain.
All stiff with ice the ashes lie ;
And they are dead, and I will die.
When I was well, I wished to live,
For clothes, for warmth, for food, and fire,
But they to me no joy can give,
No pleasure now, and no desire.
Then here contented will I lie !
Alone I cannot fear to die.

III.

Alas ! ye might have dragged me on
Another day, a single one !
Too soon I yielded to despair ;
Why did ye listen to my prayer ?

When ye were gone my limbs were stronger ;
And, oh, how grievously I rue,
That, afterwards, a little longer,
My friends, I did not follow you ?
For strong and without pain I lay,
My friends, when ye were gone away.

IV.

My Child ! they gave thee to another,
A woman who was not thy mother.
When from my arms my Babe they took,
On me how strangely did he look !
Through his whole body something ran,
A most strange working did I see ;
As if he strove to be a man,
That he might pull the sledge for me.
And then he stretched his arms, how wild !
Oh, mercy ! like a helpless child.

V.

My little joy ! my little pride !
In two days more I must have died.
Then do not weep and grieve for me ;
I feel I must have died with thee.
O wind, that o'er my head art flying
The way my friends their course did bend,
I should not feel the pain of dying,
Could I with thee a message send ;
Too soon, my friends, ye went away ;
For I had many things to say.

VI.

I'll follow you across the snow :
 Ye travel heavily and slow ;
 In spite of all my weary pain
 I'll look upon your tents again.
 My fire is dead, and snowy white
 The water which beside it stood ;
 The wolf has come to me to-night,
 And he has stolen away my food.
 For ever left alone am I,
 Then wherefore should I fear to die ? ”

1798.



LINES

WRITTEN IN EARLY SPRING.

I HEARD a thousand blended notes,
 While in a grove I sat reclined,
 In that sweet mood when pleasant thoughts
 Bring sad thoughts to the mind.

To her fair works did Nature link
 The human soul that through me ran ;
 And much it grieved my heart to think
 What man has made of man.

Through primrose tufts in that sweet bower,
 The periwinkle trailed its wreaths ;

And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

The birds around me hopped and played ;
Their thoughts I cannot measure :—
But the least motion which they made,
It seemed a thrill of pleasure.

The budding twigs spread out their fan,
To catch the breezy air ;
And I must think, do all I can,
That there was pleasure there.

From Heaven if this belief be sent,
If such be Nature's holy plan,
Have I not reason to lament
What man has made of man ?

1798.



TO MY SISTER.

It is the first mild day of March :
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands beside our door.

There is a blessing in the air,
Which seems a sense of joy to yield
To the bare trees and mountains bare,
And grass in the green field.

My Sister ! ('tis a wish of mine)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning task resign ;
Come forth and feel the sun.

Edward will come with you ; and pray
Put on with speed your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day .
We'll give to idleness.

No joyless forms shall regulate
Our living calendar :
We from to-day, my friend, will date
The opening of the year.

Love, now a universal birth,
From heart to heart is stealing,
From earth to man, from man to earth,
It is the hour of feeling.

One moment now may give us more
Than years of toiling reason :
Our minds shall drink at every pore
The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,
Which they shall long obey :
We for the year to come may take
Our temper from to-day.

And from the blessed power that rolls
About, below, above,

We'll frame the measure of our souls :
They shall be turned to love.

Then come, my Sister ! come, I pray,
With speed put on your woodland dress ;
And bring no book : for this one day
We'll give to idleness.

1798.



EXPOSTULATION AND REPLY.

"WHY, William, on that old grey stone,
Thus for the length of half a day,
Why, William, sit you thus alone,
And dream your time away ?

"Where are your books?—that light bequeathed
To beings else forlorn and blind !
Up ! up ! and drink the spirit breathed
From dead men to their kind.

"You look round on your mother earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you ;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none had lived before you !"

One morning thus, by Esthwaite lake,
When life was sweet, I knew not why,
To me my good friend Matthew spake,
And thus I made reply—

"The eye—it cannot choose but see ;
We cannot bid the ear be still ;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against, or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress ;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.

"Think you, 'mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But we must still be seeking ?

"Then ask not wherefore, here, alone,
Conversing as I may,
I sit upon this old grey stone,
And dream my time away."

1798.



THE TABLES TURNED.

AN EVENING SCENE ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

UP ! up ! my friend, and quit your books ;
Or surely you'll grow double :
Up ! up ! my friend, and clear your looks ;
Why all this toil and trouble ?

The sun, above the mountain's head,
A freshening lustre mellow
Through all the long green fields has spread,
His first sweet evening yellow.

Books ! 'tis a dull and endless strife :
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music ! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

And hark ! how blithe the throstle sings !
He, too, is no mean preacher :
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

She has a world of ready wealth,
Our minds and hearts to bless—
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,
Truth breathed by cheerfulness.

One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can.

Sweet is the lore which Nature brings ;
Our meddling intellect
Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things :—
We murder to dissect.

Enough of Science and of Art ;
Close up these barren leaves ;

Come forth, and bring with you a heart
That watches and receives.

1798.



LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON
REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING
A TOUR.

JULY 13, 1798.

FIVE years have past ; five summers, with the
length

Of five long winters ! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-
springs

With a soft inland murmur.*—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion ; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-
tufts,

Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see

* The river is not affected by the tides a few miles above
Tintern.

These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild ; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door ; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up in silence, from among the trees !
With some uncertain notice, as might seem,
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye :
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart ;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration :—feelings, too,
Of unremembered pleasure : such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime ; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,

And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul :
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this

Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness, and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight ; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart,
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer through the
 woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee !

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished
 thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again :
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was
 when first
I came among these hills ; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
(50)

Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever Nature led : more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature
then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion : the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite : a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, or any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur ; other gifts
Have followed, for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth ; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,

And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man :
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I
still

A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains ; and of all that we behold
From this green earth ; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear, both what they half create,
And what perceive ; well pleased to recognise
In Nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay :
For thou art with me, here upon the banks
Of this fair river ; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend, and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh ! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister ! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her ; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform

The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk ;
And let the misty mountain winds be free
To blow against thee : and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure, when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies ; oh ! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing
thoughts

Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations ! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these
gleams

Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together ; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came,
Unwearied in that service : rather say

With warmer love—oh ! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake !

1798.



THE OLD CUMBERLAND BEGGAR.

The class of beggars, to which the old man here described belongs, will probably soon be extinct. It consisted of poor, and, mostly, old and infirm persons, who confined themselves to a stated round in their neighbourhood, and had certain fixed days, on which, at different houses, they regularly received alms, sometimes in money, but mostly in provisions.

I SAW an aged beggar in my walk ;
And he was seated, by the highway side,
On a low structure of rude masonry
Built at the foot of a huge hill, that they
Who lead their horses down the steep rough road
May thence remount at ease. The aged man
Had placed his staff across the broad smooth
stone

That overlays the pile ; and, from a bag
All white with flour, the dole of village dames,
He drew his scraps and fragments, one by one ;
And scanned them with a fixed and serious look

Of idle computation. In the sun,
Upon the second step of that small pile,
Surrounded by those wild unpeopled hills
He sat, and ate his food in solitude :
And ever, scattered from his palsied hand,
That, still attempting to prevent the waste,
Was baffled still, the crumbs in little showers
Fell on the ground ; and the small mountain
birds,
Not venturing yet to peck their destined meal,
Approached within the length of half his staff.

Him from my childhood have I known ; and
then
He was so old, he seems not older now ;
He travels on, a solitary man,
So helpless in appearance, that for him
The sauntering horseman-traveller does not
throw
With careless hand his alms upon the ground,
But stops,—that he may safely lodge the coin
Within the old man's hat ; nor quits him so,
But still, when he has given his horse the rein,
Watches the aged beggar with a look
Sidelong—and half-reverted. She who tends
The toll-gate, when in summer at her door
She turns her wheel, if on the road she sees
The aged beggar coming, quits her work,
And lifts the latch for him that he may pass.
The post-boy, when his rattling wheels o'ertake

The aged beggar in the woody lane,
Shouts to him from behind ; and, if thus warned
The old man does not change his course, the boy
Turns with less noisy wheels to the road-side,
And passes gently by—without a curse
Upon his lips, or anger at his heart,
He travels on, a solitary man ;
His age has no companion. On the ground
His eyes are turned, and, as he moves along,
They move along the ground ; and, evermore,
Instead of common and habitual sight
Of fields with rural works, of hill and dale,
And the blue sky, one little span of earth
Is all his prospect. Thus, from day to day,
Bow-bent, his eyes for ever on the ground,
He plies his weary journey ; seeing still,
And seldom knowing that he sees, some straw,
Some scattered leaf, or marks which, in one
track,

The nails of cart or chariot-wheel have left
Impressed on the white road,—in the same line,
At distance still the same. Poor traveller !
His staff trails with him ; scarcely do his feet
Disturb the summer dust ; he is so still
In look and motion, that the cottage curs,
Ere he have passed the door, will turn away,
Weary of barking at him. Boys and girls,
The vacant and the busy, maids and youths,
And urchins newly breeched—all pass him by :
Him even the slow-paced waggon leaves behind.

But deem not this man useless.—Statesmen !
ye

Who are so restless in your wisdom, ye
Who have a broom still ready in your hands
To rid the world of nuisances ; ye proud,
Heart-swoln, while in your pride ye contemplate
Your talents, power, and wisdom, deem him not
A burthen of the earth ! 'Tis Nature's law
That none, the meanest of created things,
Of forms created the most vile and brute,
The dumbest or most noxious, should exist
Divorced from good—a spirit and pulse of good,
A life and soul, to every mode of being
Inseparably linked. While thus he creeps
From door to door, the villagers in him
Behold a record which together binds
Past deeds and offices of charity,
Else unremembered, and so keeps alive
The kindly mood in hearts which lapse of years,
And that half-wisdom half-experience gives,
Make slow to feel, and by sure steps resign
To selfishness and cold oblivious cares.
Among the farms and solitary huts,
Hamlets and thinly-scattered villages,
Where'er the aged Beggar takes his rounds,
The mild necessity of use compels
To acts of love ; and habit does the work
Of reason ; yet prepares that after-joy
Which reason cherishes. And thus the soul,
By that sweet taste of pleasure unpursued,

Doth find itself insensibly disposed
To virtue and true goodness. Some there are
By their good works exalted, lofty minds
And meditative, authors of delight
And happiness, which to the end of time
Will live, and spread, and kindle: even such
minds

In childhood, from this solitary Being,
Or from like wanderer, haply have received
(A thing more precious far than all that books
Or the solitudes of love can do!)
That first mild touch of sympathy and thought,
In which they found their kindred with a world
Where want and sorrow were. The easy man
Who sits at his own door,—and, like the pear
That overhangs his head from the green wall,
Feeds in the sunshine; the robust and young,
The prosperous and unthinking, they who live
Sheltered, and flourish in a little grove
Of their own kindred;—all behold in him
A silent monitor, which on their minds
Must needs impress a transitory thought
Of self-congratulation, to the heart
Of each recalling his peculiar boons,
His charters and exemptions; and, perchance,
Though he to no one give the fortitude
And circumspection needful to preserve
His present blessings, and to husband up
The respite of the seasons, he, at least,
And 'tis no vulgar service, makes them felt.

Yet further.—Many, I believe, there are
Who live a life of virtuous decency,
Men who can hear the Decalogue and feel
No self-reproach ; who of the moral law
Established in the land where they abide
Are strict observers ; and not negligent,
In acts of love to those with whom they dwell,
Their kindred, and the children of their blood.
Praise be to such, and to their slumbers peace !
But of the poor man ask, the abject poor ;
Go, and demand of him, if there be here
In this cold abstinence from evil deeds,
And these inevitable charities,
Wherewith to satisfy the human soul ?
No—man is dear to man ; the poorest poor
Long for some moments in a weary life
When they can know and feel that they have been,
Themselves, the fathers and the dealers out
Of some small blessings ; have been kind to such
As needed kindness, for this single cause,
That we have all of us one human heart.
Such pleasure is to one kind Being known,
My neighbour, when with punctual care, each
week,
Duly as Friday comes, though pressed herself
By her own wants, she from her store of meal
Takes one unsparing handful for the scrip
Of this old Mendicant, and, from her door
Returning with exhilarated heart,
Sits by her fire, and builds her hope in heaven.

Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !
And while in that vast solitude to which
The tide of things has borne him, he appears
To breathe and live but for himself alone,
Unblamed, uninjured, let him bear about
The good which the benignant law of Heaven
Has hung around him : and, while life is his,
Still let him prompt the unlettered villagers
To tender offices and pensive thoughts.
Then let him pass, a blessing on his head !
And, long as he can wander, let him breathe
The freshness of the valleys ; let his blood
Struggle with frosty air and winter snows ;
And let the chartered wind that sweeps the heath
Beat his grey locks against his withered face.
Reverence the hope whose vital anxiousness
Gives the last human interest to his heart.
May never HOUSE, misnamed of INDUSTRY,
Make him a captive ! for that pent-up din,
Those life-consuming sounds that clog the air,
Be his the natural silence of old age !
Let him be free of mountain solitudes ;
And have around him, whether heard or not,
The pleasant melody of woodland birds.
Few are his pleasures : if his eyes have now
Been doomed so long to settle on the earth
That not without some effort they behold
The countenance of the horizontal sun,
Rising or setting, let the light at least
Find a free entrance to their languid orbs.

And let him, *where* and *when* he will, sit down
Beneath the trees, or by the grassy bank
Of highway side, and with the little birds
Share his chance-gathered meal ; and, finally,
As in the eye of Nature he has lived,
So in the eye of Nature let him die !

1798.



ANIMAL TRANQUILLITY AND DECAY.

THE little hedgerow birds,
That peck along the road, regard him not.
He travels on, and in his face, his step,
His gait, is one expression ; every limb,
His look and bending figure, all bespeak
A man who does not move with pain, but moves
With thought.—He is insensibly subdued
To settled quiet : he is one by whom
All effort seems forgotten ; one to whom
Long patience hath such mild composure given,
That patience now doth seem a thing of which
He hath no need. He is by nature led
To peace so perfect, that the young behold
With envy, what the Old Man hardly feels.

1798.



THE SIMPLON PASS.

——BROOK and road
Were fellow-travellers in this gloomy Pass,

And with them did we journey several hours
At a slow pace. The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent, at every turn,
Winds thwarting winds bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
The rocks that muttered close upon our ears,
Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
As if a voice were in them, the sick sight
And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
The unfettered clouds and region of the heavens,
Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light—
Were all like workings of one mind, the features
Of the same face, blossoms upon one tree,
Characters of the great Apocalypse,
The types and symbols of Eternity ;
Of first, and last, and midst, and without end.

1799.



INFLUENCE OF NATURAL OBJECTS

IN CALLING FORTH AND STRENGTHENING THE IMAGINATION IN BOYHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH.

WISDOM and Spirit of the universe !
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought !
And giv'st to forms and images a breath
And everlasting motion ! not in vain,
By day or star light, thus from my first dawn

Of childhood did'st thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul ;
Not with the mean and vulgar works of Man,—
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature ; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought,
And sanctifying by such discipline
Both pain and fear,—until we recognise
A grandeur in the beatings of the heart.

Nor was this fellowship vouchsafed to me
With stinted kindness. In November days,
When vapours rolling down the valleys made
A lonely scene more lonesome ; among woods
At noon ; and 'mid the calm of summer nights,
When, by the margin of the trembling lake,
Beneath the gloomy hills, I homeward went
In solitude, such intercourse was mine :
'Twas mine among the fields both day and
night,
And by the waters, all the summer long ;
And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile,
The cottage windows through the twilight
blazed,
I heeded not the summons :—happy time
It was indeed for all of us ; for me
It was a time of rapture !—Clear and loud
The village clock tolled six—I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse

That cares not for his home.—All shod with steel
 We hissed along the polished ice, in games
 Confederate, imitative of the chase
 And woodland pleasures,—the resounding horn,
 The pack loud-bellowing, and the hunted hare.
 So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
 And not a voice was idle : with the din
 Meanwhile the precipices rang aloud ;
 The leafless trees and every icy crag
 Tinkled like iron ; while the distant hills
 Into the tumult sent an alien sound
 Of melancholy, not unnoticed, while the stars,
 Eastward, were sparkling clear, and in the west
 The orange sky of evening died away.

Not seldom from the uproar I retired
 Into a silent bay,—or sportively
 Glanced sideways, leaving the tumultuous throng,
 To cut across the reflex of a star,
 Image, that, flying still before me, gleamed
 Upon the glassy plain : and oftentimes,
 When we had given our bodies to the wind,
 And all the shadowy banks on either side
 Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning
 still
 The rapid line of motion, then at once
 Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
 Stopped short ; yet still the solitary cliffs
 Wheeled by me—even as if the earth had
 rolled

With visible motion her diurnal round !
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a summer sea.

1799.



“THERE WAS A BOY.”

THERE was a Boy ; ye knew him well, ye cliffs
And islands of Winander ! many a time,
At evening, when the earliest stars began
To move along the edges of the hills,
Rising or setting, would he stand alone,
Beneath the trees, or by the glimmering lake ;
And there, with fingers interwoven, both hands
Pressed closely palm to palm and to his mouth
Uplifted, he, as through an instrument,
Blew mimic hootings to the silent owls,
That they might answer him.—And they would
shout

Across the watery vale, and shout again,
Responsive to his call,—with quivering peals,
And long halloos, and screams, and echoes loud
Redoubled and redoubled ; concourse wild
Of mirth and jocund din ! And, when it
chanced

That pauses of deep silence mocked his skill,
Then, sometimes, in that silence, while he hung
Listening, a gentle shock of mild surprise

Has carried far into his heart the voice
Of mountain torrents ; or the visible scene
Would enter unawares into his mind
With all its solemn imagery, its rocks,
Its woods, and that uncertain heaven, received
Into the bosom of the steady lake.

This boy was taken from his mates, and died
In childhood, ere he was full twelve years old.
Fair is the spot, most beautiful the vale
Where he was born : the grassy church-yard
hangs
Upon a slope above the village school ;
And through that church-yard when my way
has led
At evening, I believe, that oftentimes
A long half-hour together I have stood
Mute—looking at the grave in which he lies !

1799.



NUTTING.

IT seems a day
(I speak of one from many singled out)
One of those heavenly days which cannot die ;
When, in the eagerness of boyish hope,
I left our cottage threshold, sallying forth
With a huge wallet o'er my shoulder slung,
A nutting-crook in hand, and turned my steps

Towards the distant woods, a Figure quaint,
Tricked out in proud disguise of cast-off weeds
Which for that service had been husbanded,
By exhortation of my frugal Dame.

Motley accoutrement, of power to smile
At thorns, and brakes, and brambles,—and in
truth,

More ragged than need was! Among the
woods,

And o'er the pathless rocks, I forced my way,
Until, at length, I came to one dear nook
Unvisited, where not a broken bough
Drooped with its withered leaves, ungracious
sign

Of devastation, but the hazels rose
Tall and erect, with milk-white clusters hung,
A virgin scene!—A little while I stood,
Breathing with such suppression of the heart
As joy delights in; and with wise restraint
Voluptuous, fearless of a rival, eyed
The banquet,—or beneath the trees I sate
Among the flowers, and with the flowers I
played;

A temper known to those, who, after long
And weary expectation, have been blest
With sudden happiness beyond all hope.—
Perhaps it was a bower beneath whose leaves
The violets of five seasons re-appear
And fade, unseen by any human eye;
Where fairy water-breaks do murmur on

For ever,—and I saw the sparkling foam,
And with my cheek on one of those green stones
That, fleeced with moss, beneath the shady
trees,

Lay round me, scattered like a flock of sheep,
I heard the murmur and the murmuring sound,
In that sweet mood when pleasure loves to pay
Tribute to ease ; and, of its joy secure,
The heart luxuriates with indifferent things,
Wasting its kindliness on stocks and stones,
And on the vacant air. Then up I rose,
And dragged to earth both branch and bough,
with crash

And merciless ravage ; and the shady nook
Of hazels, and the green and mossy bower,
Deformed and sullied, patiently gave up
Their quiet being : and, unless I now
Confound my present feelings with the past,
Even then, when from the bower I turned away
Exulting, rich beyond the wealth of kings,
I felt a sense of pain when I beheld
The silent trees and the intruding sky.—
Then, dearest Maiden ! move along these
shades

In gentleness of heart : with gentle hand
Touch—for there is a spirit in the woods.

LUCY POEMS.

I.

"SHE DWELT AMONG THE UNTRODDEN
WAYS."

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye !
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and, oh,
The difference to me !

1799.

II.

"I TRAVELLED AMONG UNKNOWN MEN."

I TRAVELLED among unknown men,
In lands beyond the sea ;
Nor, England ! did I know till then
What love I bore to thee.

'Tis past, that melancholy dream !
Nor will I quit thy shore
A second time ; for still I seem
To love thee more and more.

Among thy mountains did I feel
The joy of my desire ;
And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire.

Thy mornings showed, thy nights concealed
The bowers where Lucy played ;
And thine too is the last green field
That Lucy's eyes surveyed.

1799.

III.

“THREE YEARS SHE GREW IN SUN AND
SHOWER.”

THREE years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, “A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown ;
This Child I to myself will take ;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

“Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse : and with me
The Girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle or restrain.

“She shall be sportive as the fawn
That wild with glee across the lawn
Or up the mountain springs ;
And hers shall be the breathing balm,
And hers the silence and the calm
Of mute insensate things.

“The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her ; for her the willow bend :
Nor shall she fail to see
Even in the motions of the Storm
Grace that shall mould the Maiden’s form
By silent sympathy.

"The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her ; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face.

"And vital feelings of delight
Shall rear her form to stately height,
Her virgin bosom swell ;
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give
While she and I together live
Here in this happy dell."

Thus Nature spake—the work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run !
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene ;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

1799.

IV.

"A SLUMBER DID MY SPIRIT SEAL."

A SLUMBER did my spirit seal ;
I had no human fears :
She seemed a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

No motion has she now, no force ;
She neither hears nor sees,
Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees !

1799.

*A POET'S EPITAPH.*

ART thou a Statist, in the van
Of public business trained and bred ?
First learn to love one living man ;
Then mayest thou think upon the dead.

A Lawyer art thou ?—draw not nigh ;
Go, carry to some fitter place
The keenness of that practised eye,
The hardness of that sallow face.

Art thou a Man of purple cheer ?
A rosy Man, right plump to see ?
Approach ; yet, Doctor, not too near :
This grave no cushion is for thee.

Or art thou one of gallant pride,
A Soldier, and no man of chaff ?
Welcome !—but lay thy sword aside,
And lean upon a peasant's staff.

Physician art thou ? One all eyes,
Philosopher ! a fingering slave,

One that would peep and botanize
Upon his mother's grave ?

Wrapt closely in thy sensual fleece,
O turn aside,—and take, I pray,
That he below may rest in peace,
Thy ever-dwindling soul away !

A Moralist perchance appears ;
Led, Heaven knows how ! to this poor sod :
And he has neither eyes nor ears ;
Himself his world, and his own God :

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling
Nor form, nor feeling, great or small ;
A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,
An intellectual All-in-all !

Shut close the door ; press down the latch ;
Sleep in thy intellectual crust ;
Nor lose ten tickings of thy watch
Near this unprofitable dust. . .

But who is He, with modest looks,
And clad in homely russet brown ?
He murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own.

He is retired as noontide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove ;
And you must love him, ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

The outward shows of sky and earth,
Of hill and valley he has viewed ;
And impulses of deeper birth
Have come to him in solitude.

In common things that round us lie
Some random truths he can impart,—
The harvest of a quiet eye
That broods and sleeps on his own heart.

But he is weak ; both Man and Boy,
Hath been an idler in the land ;
Contented if he might enjoy
The things which others understand.

Come hither in thy hour of strength ;
Come, weak as is a breaking wave !
Here stretch thy body at full length ;
Or build thy house upon this grave.

1790.



MATTHEW POEMS.



I.

MATTHEW.

In the school of — is a tablet, on which are inscribed, in gilt letters, the names of the several persons who have been schoolmasters there since the foundation of the school, with the time at which they entered upon and quitted their office. Opposite one of those names the author wrote the following lines :—

IF Nature, for a favourite child
In thee hath tempered so her clay
That every hour thy heart runs wild
Yet never once doth go astray,

Read o'er these lines ; and then review
This tablet, that thus humbly rears
In such diversity of hue
Its history of two hundred years.

When through this little wreck of fame,
Cipher and syllable ! thine eye
Has travelled down to Matthew's name,
Pause with no common sympathy.

And, if a sleeping tear should wake,
Then be it neither checked nor stayed :
For Matthew a request I make
Which for himself he had not made.

Poor Matthew, all his frolics o'er,
Is silent as a standing pool :
Far from the chimney's merry roar,
And murmur of the village school.

The sighs which Matthew heaved were sighs
Of one tired out with fun and madness ;
The tears which came to Matthew's eyes
Were tears of light, the dew of gladness.

Yet, sometimes, when the secret cup
Of still and serious thought went round,
It seemed as if he drank it up—
He felt with spirit so profound.

Thou soul of God's best earthly mould !
Thou happy soul ! and can it be
That these two words of glittering gold
Are all that must remain of thee ?

1799.

II.

THE TWO APRIL MORNINGS.

WE walked along, while bright and red
Uprose the morning sun :

And Matthew stopped, he looked, and said,
"The will of God be done!"

A village schoolmaster was he,
With hair of glittering grey;
As blithe a man as you could see
On a spring holiday.

And on that morning, through the grass,
And by the steaming rills,
We travelled merrily, to pass
A day among the hills.

"Our work," said I, "was well begun;
Then, from thy breast what thought,
Beneath so beautiful a sun,
So sad a sigh has brought?"

A second time did Matthew stop;
And fixing still his eye
Upon the eastern mountain-top,
To me he made reply:

"Yon cloud with that long purple cleft
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this which I have left
Full thirty years behind.

"And just above yon slope of corn
Such colours, and no other,
Were in the sky, that April morn,
Of this the very brother.

“ With rod and line I sued the sport
Which that sweet season gave,
And, to the church-yard come, stopped short
Beside my daughter's grave.

“ Nine summers had she scarcely seen,
The pride of all the vale ;
And then she sang ;—she would have been
A very nightingale.

“ Six feet in earth my Emma lay ;
And yet I loved her more,
For so it seemed, than till that day
I e'er had loved before.

“ And turning from her grave, I met,
Beside the church-yard yew,
A blooming Girl, whose hair was wet
With points of morning dew.

“ A basket on her head she bare ;
Her brow was smooth and white :
To see a child so very fair,
It was a pure delight !

“ No fountain from its rocky cave
E'er tripped with foot so free ;
She seemed as happy as a wave
That dances on the sea.

“ There came from me a sigh of pain
Which I could ill confine ;

I looked at her, and looked again :
And did not wish her mine."

Matthew is in his grave, yet now,
Methinks, I see him stand,
As at that moment, with a bough
Of wilding in his hand.

1799.

III.

THE FOUNTAIN.

A Conversation.

WE talked with open heart, and tongue
Affectionate and true,
A pair of friends, though I was young,
And Matthew seventy-two.

We lay beneath a spreading oak,
Beside a mossy seat ;
And from the turf a fountain broke,
And gurgled at our feet.

"Now, Matthew, let us try to match
This water's pleasant tune
With some old Border-song, or catch,
That suits a summer's noon ;

"Or of the church clock and the chimes
Sing here beneath the shade,

That half-mad thing of witty rhymes
Which you last April made ! ”

In silence Matthew lay, and eyed
The spring beneath the tree ;
And thus the dear old Man replied,
The grey-haired man of glee :

“ Down to the vale this water steers,
How merrily it goes !
'Twill murmur on a thousand years,
And flow as now it flows.

“ And here, on this delightful day,
I cannot choose but think
How oft, a vigorous man, I lay
Beside this fountain's brink.

“ My eyes are dim with childish tears,
My heart is idly stirred,
For the same sound is in my ears
Which in those days I heard.

“ Thus fares it still in our decay :
And yet the wiser mind
Mourns less for what age takes away
Than what it leaves behind.

“ The blackbird in the summer trees,
The lark upon the hill,
Let loose their carols when they please,
Are quiet when they will.

"With Nature never do *they* wage
A foolish strife ; they see
A happy youth, and their old age
Is beautiful and free :

"But we are pressed by heavy laws ;
And often, glad no more,
We wear a face of joy, because
We have been glad of yore.

"If there is one who need bemoan
His kindred laid in earth,
The household hearts that were his own,
It is the man of mirth.

"My days, my Friend, are almost gone,
My life has been approved,
And many love me ; but by none
Am I enough beloved."

"Now both himself and me he wrongs,
The man who thus complains !
I live and sing my idle songs
Upon these happy plains,

"And, Matthew, 'for thy children dead,
I'll be a son to thee !"
At this he grasped his hands, and said,
"Alas ! that cannot be."

We rose up from the fountain-side ;
And down the smooth descent

Of the green sheep-track did we glide ;
And through the wood we went ;

And, ere we came to Leonard's rock,
He sang those witty rhymes
About the crazy old church clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

1799.



THE DANISH BOY.

A FRAGMENT.

I.

BETWEEN two sister moorland rills
There is a spot that seems to lie
Sacred to flowrets of the hills,
And sacred to the sky.
And in this smooth and open dell
There is a tempest-stricken tree ;
A corner-stone by lightning cut,
The last stone of a cottage hut ;
And in this dell you see
A thing no storm can e'er destroy,
The shadow of a Danish Boy.

II.

In clouds above, the lark is heard,
But drops not here to earth for rest :
Within this nook the lonesome bird

Did never build her nest.
No beast, no bird hath here his home ;
Bees, wafted on the breezy air,
Pass high above those fragrant bells
To other flowers ; to other dells
Their burthens do they bear ;
The Danish Boy walks here alone :
The lovely dell is all his own.

III.

A Spirit of noon-day is he ;
He seems a form of flesh and blood ;
Nor piping shepherd shall he be,
Nor herd-boy of the wood.
A regal vest of fur he wears,
In colour like a raven's wing ;
It fears not rain, nor wind, nor dew ;
But in the storm 'tis fresh and blue
As budding pines in spring ;
His helmet was a vernal grace,
Fresh as the bloom upon his face.

IV.

A harp is from his shoulder slung ;
He rests the harp upon his knee ;
And there, in a forgotten tongue,
He warbles melody.
Of flocks upon the neighbouring hill
He is the darling and the joy ;
And often, when no cause appears,

The mountain ponies prick their ears,
They hear the Danish Boy,
While in the dell he sits alone
Beside the tree and corner-stone.

V.

There sits he : in his face you spy
No trace of a ferocious air,
Nor ever was a cloudless sky
So steady or so fair.
The lovely Danish Boy is blest
And happy in his flowery cove :
From bloody deeds his thoughts are far,
And yet he warbles songs of war,
That seem like songs of love,
For calm and gentle is his mien ;
Like a dead Boy he is serene.

1799.

*LUCY GRAY ; OR, SOLITUDE.*

OFT I had heard of Lucy Gray :
And, when I crossed the wild,
I chanced to see at break of day
The solitary child.

No mate, no comrade Lucy knew ;
She dwelt on a wide moor—
The sweetest thing that ever grew
Beside a human door !

You yet may spy the fawn at play,
The hare upon the green ;
But the sweet face of Lucy Gray
Will never more be seen.

“ To-night will be a stormy night—
You to the town must go ;
And take a lantern, child, to light
Your mother through the snow.”

“ That, Father, will I gladly do :
'Tis scarcely afternoon—
The minster clock has just struck two,
And yonder is the moon.”

At this the father raised his hook,
And snapped a faggot band ;
He plied his work ;—and Lucy took
The lantern in her hand.

Not blither is the mountain roe :
With many a wanton stroke
Her feet disperse the powdery snow,
That rises up like smoke.

The storm came on before its time :
She wandered up and down ;
And many a hill did Lucy climb ;
But never reached the town.

The wretched parents all that night
Went shouting far and wide ;

But there was neither sound nor sight
To serve them for a guide.

At day-break on a hill they stood
That overlooked the moor ;
And thence they saw the bridge of wood,
A furlong from their door.

They wept, and turning homeward, cried,
" In heaven we all shall meet : "
When in the snow the mother spied
The print of Lucy's feet.

Then downward from the steep hill's edge
They track the footmarks small ;
And through the broken hawthorn hedge,
And by the long stone wall ;

And then an open field they crossed :
The marks were still the same ;
They tracked them on, nor ever lost ;
And to the bridge they came.

They followed from the snowy bank
Those footmarks, one by one,
Into the middle of the plank ;
And further there were none !

Yet some maintain that to this day
She is a living child ;
That you may see sweet Lucy Gray
Upon the lonesome wild.

O'er rough and smooth she trips along,
And never looks behind ;
And sings a solitary song
That whistles in the wind.

1799.

*RUTH.*

WHEN Ruth was left half desolate,
Her father took another mate ;
And Ruth, not seven years old,
A slighted child, at her own will
Went wandering over dale and hill,
In thoughtless freedom bold.

And she had made a pipe of straw,
And from that oaten pipe could draw
All sounds of winds and floods ;
Had built a bower upon the green,
As if she from her birth had been
An infant of the woods.

Beneath her father's roof, alone
She seemed to live ; her thoughts her own ;
Herself her own delight ;
Pleased with herself, nor sad nor gay ;
And passing thus the live-long day,
She grew to woman's height.

There came a youth from Georgia's shore—
A military casque he wore,

With splendid feathers drest ;
He brought them from the Cherokees ;
The feathers nodded in the breeze,
And made a gallant crest.

From Indian blood you deem him sprung :
Ah no ! he spake the English tongue,
And bore a soldier's name ;
And, when America was free
From battle and from jeopardy,
He 'cross the ocean came.

With hues of genius on his cheek
In finest tones the youth could speak.
While he was yet a boy,
The moon, the glory of the sun,
And streams that murmur as they run,
Had been his dearest joy.

He was a lovely youth ! I guess
The panther in the wilderness
Was not so fair as he ;
And when he chose to sport and play,
No dolphin ever was so gay
Upon the tropic sea.

Among the Indians he had fought ;
And with him many tales he brought
Of pleasure and of fear ;
Such tales as told to any maid
By such a youth, in the green shade,
Were perilous to hear.

He told of girls—a happy rout !
Who quit their fold with dance and shout,
Their pleasant Indian town,
To gather strawberries all day long ;
Returning with a choral song
When daylight is gone down.

He spake of plants divine and strange
That every hour their blossoms change,
Ten thousand lovely hues !
With budding, fading, faded flowers
They stand the wonder of the bowers
From morn to evening dews.

He told of the magnolia spread
High as a cloud, high over head !
The cypress and her spire ;
Of flowers that with one scarlet gleam
Cover a hundred leagues, and seem
To set the hills on fire.

The youth of green savannas spake,
And many an endless, endless lake,
With all its fairy crowds
Of islands, that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds.

And then he said, " How sweet it were,
A fisher or a hunter there,
A gardener in the shade,
Still wandering with an easy mind

To build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade !

“What days and what sweet years ! Ah me !
Our life were life indeed, with thee
So passed in quiet bliss,
And all the while,” said he, “to know
That we were in a world of woe,
On such an earth as this !”

And then he sometimes interwove
Dear thoughts about a father’s love :
“For there,” said he, “are spun
Around the heart such tender ties,
That our own children to our eyes
Are dearer than the sun.

“Sweet Ruth ! and could you go with me
My helpmate in the woods to be,
Our shed at night to rear ;
Or run my own adopted bride,
A sylvan huntress at my side,
And drive the flying deer !

“Beloved Ruth !”—No more he said.
The wakeful Ruth at midnight shed
A solitary tear :
She thought again—and did agree
With him to sail across the sea,
And drive the flying deer.

"And now, as fitting is and right,
We in the church our faith will plight,
A husband and a wife."

Even so they did ; and I may say
That to sweet Ruth that happy day
Was more than human life.

Through dream and vision did she sink,
Delighted all the while to think
That on those lonesome floods,
And green savannas, she should share
His board with lawful joy, and bear
His name in the wild woods.

But, as you have before been told,
This stripling, sportive, gay, and bold,
And with his dancing crest
So beautiful, through savage lands
Had roamed about, with vagrant bands
Of Indians in the west.

The wind, the tempest roaring high,
The tumult of a tropic sky,
Might well be dangerous food
For him, a youth to whom was given
So much of earth—so much of heaven,
And such impetuous blood.

Whatever in those climes he found
Irregular in sight or sound
Did to his mind impart
A kindred impulse, seemed allied

To his own powers, and justified
The workings of his heart.

Nor less, to feed voluptuous thought,
The beauteous forms of nature wrought,
Fair trees and lovely flowers ;
The breezes their own languor lent :
The stars had feelings, which they sent
Into those gorgeous bowers.

Yet, in his worst pursuits, I ween
That sometimes there did intervene
Pure hopes of high intent :
For passions linked to forms so fair
And stately, needs must have their share
Of noble sentiment.

But ill he lived, much evil saw
With men to whom no better law
Nor better life was known ;
Deliberately, and undeceived,
Those wild men's vices he received,
And gave them back his own.

His genius and his moral frame
Were thus impaired, and he became
The slave of low desires :
A man who without self-control
Would seek what the degraded soul
Unworthily admires.

And yet he with no feigned delight
Had wooed the maiden, day and night
Had loved her, night and morn :
What could he less than love a maid
Whose heart with so much nature played ?
So kind and so forlorn !

Sometimes, most earnestly, he said,
"O Ruth ! I have been worse than dead ;
False thoughts, thoughts bold and vain,
Encompassed me on every side
When first, in confidence and pride,
I crossed the Atlantic main.

"It was a fresh and glorious world,
A banner bright that was unfurled
Before me suddenly :
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains
To live at liberty.

"But wherefore speak of this ? For now,
Sweet Ruth ! with thee, I know not how,
I feel my spirit burn—
Even as the east when day comes forth ;
And, to the west, and south, and north,
The morning doth return."

Full soon that purer mind was gone ;
No hope, no wish remained, not one,—
They stirred him now no more ;
New objects did new pleasure give ;

And once again he wished to live
As lawless as before.

Meanwhile, as thus with him it fared,
They for the voyage were prepared,
And went to the sea-shore ;
But, when they thither came, the youth
Deserted his poor bride, and Ruth
Could never find him more.

God help thee, Ruth !—Such pains she had
That she in half a year was mad,
And in a prison housed ;
And there she sang tumultuous songs,
By recollection of her wrongs,
To fearful passion roused.

Yet sometimes milder hours she knew,
Nor wanted sun, nor rain, nor dew,
Nor pastimes of the May,
They all were with her in her cell ;
And a wild brook with cheerful knell
Did o'er the pebbles play.

When Ruth three seasons thus had lain,
There came a respite to her pain ;
She from her prison fled ;
But of the vagrant none took thought ;
And where it liked her best she sought
Her shelter and her bread.

Among the fields she breathed again :
The master-current of her brain
Ran permanent and free ;
And, coming to the banks of Tone,
There did she rest ; and dwell alone
Under the greenwood tree.

The engines of her pain, the tools
That shaped her sorrow, rocks and pools,
And airs that gently stir
The vernal leaves, she loved them still,
Nor ever taxed them with the ill
Which had been done to her.

A barn her *winter* bed supplies ;
But, till the warmth of summer skies
And summer days is gone,
(And all do in this tale agree)
She sleeps beneath the greenwood tree,
And other home hath none.

An innocent life, yet far astray !
And Ruth will, long before her day,
Be broken down and old :
Sore aches she needs must have ! but less
Of mind than body's wretchedness,
From damp, and rain, and cold.

If she is pressed by want of food,
She from her dwelling in the wood
Repairs to a road-side ;
And there she begs at one steep place,

Where up and down with easy pace
The horsemen-travellers ride.

That oaten pipe of hers is mute,
Or thrown away : but with a flute
Her loneliness she cheers :
This flute, made of a hemlock stalk,
At evening in his homeward walk
The Quantock woodman hears.

I, too, have passed her on the hills
Setting her little water-mills
By spouts and fountains wild—
Such small machinery as she turned
Ere she had wept, ere she had mourned,
A young and happy child !

Farewell ! and when thy days are told,
Ill-fated Ruth ! in hallowed mould
Thy corpse shall buried be ;
For thee a funeral bell shall ring,
And all the congregation sing
A Christian psalm for thee.

1799.



MICHAEL.

A PASTORAL POEM.

IF from the public way you turn your steps
Up the tumultuous brook of Green-head Ghyll,

You will suppose that with an upright path
Your feet must struggle ; in such bold ascent
The pastoral mountains front you, face to face.
But, courage ! for around that boisterous brook
The mountains have all opened out themselves,
And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation can be seen : but they
Who journey thither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks and stones, and
kites

That overhead are sailing in the sky.
It is in truth an utter solitude ;
Nor should I have made mention of this dell
But for one object which you might pass by,
Might see and notice not. Beside the brook
Appears a straggling heap of unhewn stones !
And to that place a story appertains,
Which, though it be ungarnished with events,
Is not unfit, I deem, for the fireside,
Or for the summer shade. It was the first
Of those domestic tales that spake to me
Of shepherds, dwellers in the valleys, men
Whom I already loved ;—not verily
For their own sakes, but for the fields and hills
Where was their occupation and abode.
And hence this tale, while I was yet a boy
Careless of books, yet having felt the power
Of nature, by the gentle agency
Of natural objects led me on to feel
For passions that were not my own, and think

(At random and imperfectly indeed)
On man, the heart of man, and human life.
Therefore, although it be a history
Homely and rude, I will relate the same
For the delight of a few natural hearts ;
And, with yet fonder feeling, for the sake
Of youthful poets, who among these hills
Will be my second self when I am gone.

Upon the forest-side in Grasmere Vale
There dwelt a shepherd, Michael was his name ;
An old man, stout of heart, and strong of limb.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength : his mind was keen,
Intense, and frugal, apt for all affairs,
And in his shepherd's calling he was prompt
And watchful more than ordinary men.
Hence had he learned the meaning of all winds,
Of blasts of every tone ; and, oftentimes,
When others heeded not, he heard the South
Make subterraneous music, like the noise
Of bagpipers on distant Highland hills.
The shepherd, at such warning, of his flock
Bethought him, and he to himself would say,
" The winds are now devising work for me ! "
And, truly, at all times, the storm—that drives
The traveller to a shelter—summoned him
Up to the mountains : he had been alone
Amid the heart of many thousand mists,
That came to him and left him on the heights.

So lived he till his eightieth year was past.
And grossly that man errs, who should suppose
That the green valleys, and the streams and rocks,
Were things indifferent to the shepherd's
thoughts.

Fields, where with cheerful spirits he had
breathed

The common air ; the hills, which he so oft
Had climbed with vigorous steps ; which had
impressed

So many incidents upon his mind
Of hardship, skill or courage, joy or fear ;
Which like a book preserved the memory
Of the dumb animals, whom he had saved,
Had fed or sheltered, linking to such acts,
So grateful in themselves, the certainty
Of honourable gain ; these fields, these hills,
Which were his living being, even more
Than his own blood—what could they less ?—
had laid

Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

His days had not been passed in singleness.
His helpmate was a comely matron, old—
Though younger than himself full twenty years.
She was a woman of a stirring life,
Whose heart was in her house : two wheels she
had

Of antique form, this large for spinning wool,
That small for flax ; and if one wheel had rest,
It was because the other was at work.

The pair had but one inmate in their house,
An only child, who had been born to them
When Michael, telling o'er his years, began
To deem that he was old,—in shepherd's phrase,
With one foot in the grave. This only son,
With two brave sheep-dogs tried in many a
storm,

The one of an inestimable worth,
Made all their household. I may truly say,
That they were as a proverb in the vale
For endless industry. When day was gone,
And from their occupations out of doors
The son and father were come home, even then,
Their labour did not cease ; unless when all
Turned to their cleanly supper-board, and there,
Each with a mess of pottage and skimmed
milk,

Sat round their basket piled with oaten cakes,
And their plain home-made cheese. Yet when
their meal

Was ended, Luke (for so the son was named)
And his old father both betook themselves
To such convenient work as might employ
Their hands by the fireside ; perhaps to card
Wool for the housewife's spindle, or repair
Some injury done to sickle, flail, or scythe,
Or other implement of house or field.

Down from the ceiling by the chimney's edge
That in our ancient uncouth country style
Did with a huge projection overbrow
Large space beneath, as duly as the light
Of day grew dim the housewife hung a lamp ;
An aged utensil, which had performed
Service beyond all others of its kind.
Early at evening did it burn and late,
Surviving comrade of uncounted hours,
Which going by from year to year had found
And left the couple neither gay perhaps
Nor cheerful, yet with objects and with hopes,
Living a life of eager industry.

And now, when Luke had reached his eighteenth
year,

There by the light of this old lamp they sat,
Father and son, while late into the night
The housewife plied her own peculiar work,
Making the cottage through the silent hours
Murmur as with the sound of summer flies.
This light was famous in its neighbourhood,
And was a public symbol of the life
The thrifty pair had lived. For, as it chanced,
Their cottage on a plot of rising ground
Stood single, with large prospect, north and
south,

High into Easedale, up to Dunmail-Raise,
And westward to the village near the lake ;
And from this constant light, so regular
And so far seen, the house itself, by all

Who dwelt within the limits of the vale,
Both old and young, was named THE EVENING
STAR.

Thus living on through such a length of years,
The shepherd, if he loved himself, must needs
Have loved his helpmate ; but to Michael's
heart

This son of his old age was yet more dear—
Less from instinctive tenderness, the same
Blind spirit, which is in the blood of all—
Than that a child, more than all other gifts,
Brings hope with it, and forward looking
thoughts,

And stirrings of inquietude, when they
By tendency of nature needs must fail.
Exceeding was the love he bare to him,
His heart and his heart's joy ! For oftentimes
Old Michael, while he was a babe in arms,
Had done him female service, not alone
For pastime and delight, as is the use
Of fathers, but with patient mind enforced
To acts of tenderness ; and he had rocked
His cradle with a woman's gentle hand.

And, in a later time, ere yet the boy
Had put on boy's attire, did Michael love,
Albeit of a stern unbending mind,
To have the young one in his sight, when he
Had work by his own door, or when he sat

With sheep before him on his shepherd's stool,
Beneath that large old oak, which near their
door
Stood,—and, from its enormous breadth of
shade,
Chosen for the shearer's covert from the sun,
Thence in our rustic dialect was called
The CLIPPING TREE,* a name which yet it
bears.

There, while they two were sitting in the shade,
With others round them, earnest all and blithe,
Would Michael exercise his heart with looks
Of fond correction and reproof bestowed
Upon the child, if he disturbed the sheep
By catching at their legs, or with his shouts
Scared them, while they lay still beneath the
shears.

And when by Heaven's good grace the boy
grew up
A healthy lad, and carried in his cheek
Two steady roses that were five years old,
Then Michael from a winter coppice cut
With his own hand a sapling, which he hooped
With iron, making it throughout in all
Due requisites a perfect shepherd's staff,
And gave it to the boy; wherewith equipt
He as a watchman oftentimes was placed

* Clipping is the word used in the North of England for shearing.

At gate or gap, to stem or turn the flock ;
And, to his office prematurely called,
There stood the urchin, as you will divine,
Something between a hindrance and a help ;
And for this course not always, I believe,
Receiving from his father hire of praise ;
Though nought was left undone which staff or
voice,
Or looks, or threatening gestures could perform.

But soon as Luke, full ten years old, could
stand
Against the mountain blasts ; and to the heights,
Not fearing toil, nor length of weary ways,
He with his father daily went, and they
Were as companions, why should I relate
That objects which the shepherd loved before
Were dearer now? that from the boy there came
Feelings and emanations—things which were
Light to the sun and music to the wind ;
And that the old man's heart seemed born again.
Thus in his father's sight the boy grew up ;
And now when he had reached his eighteenth
year,
He was his comfort and his daily hope.

While in this sort the simple household lived
From day to day, to Michael's ear there came
Distressful tidings. Long before the time
Of which I speak, the shepherd had been bound

In surety for his brother's son, a man
Of an industrious life, and ample means—
But unforeseen misfortunes suddenly
Had prest upon him,—and old Michael now
Was summoned to discharge the forfeiture,
A grievous penalty, but little less
Than half his substance. This unlooked-for
claim,

At the first hearing, for a moment took
More hope out of his life than he supposed
That any old man ever could have lost.
As soon as he had gathered so much strength
That he could look his trouble in the face,
It seemed that his sole refuge was to sell
A portion of his patrimonial fields.
Such was his first resolve ; he thought again,
And his heart failed him. "Isabel," said he,
Two evenings after he had heard the news,
"I have been toiling more than seventy years,
And in the open sunshine of God's love
Have we all lived ; yet if these fields of ours
Should pass into a stranger's hand, I think
That I could not lie quiet in my grave.
Our lot is a hard lot ; the sun himself
Has scarcely been more diligent than I ;
And I have lived to be a fool at last
To my own family. An evil man
That was, and made an evil choice, if he
Were false to us ; and if he were not false,
There are ten thousand to whom loss like this

Had been no sorrow. I forgive him—but
'Twere better to be dumb than to talk thus.
When I began, my purpose was to speak
Of remedies and of a cheerful hope.
Our Luke shall leave us, Isabel; the land
Shall not go from us, and it shall be free;
He shall possess it free as is the wind
That passes over it. We have, thou knowest,
Another kinsman—he will be our friend
In this distress. He is a prosperous man,
Thriving in trade—and Luke to him shall go,
And with his kinsman's help and his own thrift
He quickly will repair this loss, and then
May come again to us. If here he stay,
What can be done? Where every one is poor,
What can be gained?" At this the old man
paused,

And Isabel sat silent, for her mind
Was busy, looking back into past times.
There's Richard Bateman, thought she to herself,
He was a parish-boy—at the church-door
They made a gathering for him, shillings, pence,
And halfpennies, wherewith the neighbours
bought

A basket, which they filled with pedlar's wares;
And with this basket on his arm, the lad,
Went up to London, found a master there,
Who out of many chose the trusty boy
To go and overlook his merchandise
Beyond the seas: where he grew wondrous rich,

And left estates and moneys to the poor,
And at his birthplace built a chapel floored
With marble, which he sent from foreign lands.
These thoughts, and many others of like sort,
Passed quickly through the mind of Isabel,
And her face brightened. The old man was
glad,
And thus resumed : — “ Well, Isabel ! this
scheme

These two days has been meat and drink to me,
Far more than we have lost is left us yet.—
We have enough—I wish indeed that I
Were younger,—but this hope is a good hope.
Make ready Luke's best garments, of the best
Buy for him more, and let us send him forth
To-morrow, or the next day, or to-night :
If he *could* go, the boy should go to-night.”
Here Michael ceased, and to the fields went
forth

With a light heart. The housewife for five days
Was restless morn and night, and all day long
Wrought on with her best fingers to prepare
Things needful for the journey of her son.
But Isabel was glad when Sunday came
To stop her in her work : for, when she lay
By Michael's side, she through the two last nights
Heard him, how he was troubled in his sleep :
And when they rose at morning she could see
That all his hopes were gone. That day at noon
She said to Luke, while they two by themselves

Were sitting at the door, "Thou must not go :
We have no other child but thee to lose,
None to remember—do not go away,
For if thou leave thy father he will die."
The youth made answer with a jocund voice ;
And Isabel, when she had told her fears,
Recovered heart. That evening her best fare
Did she bring forth, and all together sat
Like happy people round a Christmas fire.

With daylight Isabel resumed her work ;
And all the ensuing week the house appeared
As cheerful as a grove in spring : at length
The expected letter from their kinsman came,
With kind assurances that he would do
His utmost for the welfare of the boy ;
To which, requests were added, that forthwith
He might be sent to him. Ten times or more
The letter was read over ; Isabel
Went forth to show it to the neighbours round ;
Nor was there at that time on English land
A prouder heart than Luke's. When Isabel
Had to her house returned, the old man said,
"He shall depart to-morrow." To this word
The housewife answered, talking much of things
Which, if at such short notice he should go,
Would surely be forgotten. But at length
She gave consent, and Michael was at ease.

Near the tumultuous brook of Green-head
Ghyll,

In that deep valley, Michael had designed
To build a sheep-fold ; and, before he heard
The tidings of his melancholy loss,
For this same purpose he had gathered up
A heap of stones, which by the streamlet's edge
Lay thrown together, ready for the work.
With Luke that evening thitherward he walked ;
And soon as they had reached the place he
stopped,

And thus the old man spake to him :—" My son,
To-morrow thou wilt leave me : with full heart
I look upon thee, for thou art the same
That wert a promise to me ere thy birth,
And all thy life hast been my daily joy.
I will relate to thee some little part
Of our two histories ; 'twill do thee good
When thou art from me, even if I should speak
Of things thou canst not know of.—After thou
First cam'st into the world—as oft befalls
To new-born infants—thou didst sleep away
Two days, and blessings from thy father's
tongue

Then fell upon thee. Day by day passed on,
And still I loved thee with increasing love.
Never to living ear came sweeter sounds
Than when I heard thee by our own fireside
First uttering, without words, a natural tune ;
When thou, a feeding babe, didst in thy joy
Sing at thy mother's breast. Month followed
month,

And in the open fields my life was passed
And on the mountains, else I think that thou
Hadst been brought up upon thy father's knees.
But we were playmates, Luke : among these
hills,

As well thou know'st, in us the old and young
Have played together, nor with me didst thou
Lack any pleasure which a boy can know."
Luke had a manly heart ; but at these words
He sobbed aloud. The old man grasped his
hand,

And said, " Nay, do not take it so—I see
That these are things of which I need not speak.
Even to the utmost I have been to thee
A kind and a good father : and herein
I but repay a gift which I myself
Received at others' hands ; for, though now old
Beyond the common life of man, I still
Remember them who loved me in my youth.
Both of them sleep together : here they lived
As all their forefathers had done ; and when
At length their time was come, they were not
loath

To give their bodies to the family mould.
I wished that thou shouldst live the life they
lived.

But 'tis a long time to look back, my son,
And see so little gain from threescore years.
These fields were burthened when they came
to me ;

Till I was forty years of age, not more
Than half of my inheritance was mine.
I toiled and toiled ; God blessed me in my work,
And till these three weeks past the land was free.
It looks as if it never could endure
Another master. Heaven forgive me, Luke,
If I judge ill for thee, but it seems good
That thou shouldst go." At this the old man
paused ;

Then, pointing to the stones near which they
stood,

Thus, after a short silence, he resumed :

"This was a work for us ; and now, my son,
It is a work for me. But, lay one stone—
Here, lay it for me, Luke, with thine own
hands.

Nay, boy, be of good hope ;—we both may live
To see a better day. At eighty-four
I still am strong and hale ;—do thou thy part,
I will do mine.—I will begin again
With many tasks that were resigned to thee ;
Up to the heights, and in among the storms,
Will I without thee go again, and do
All works which I was wont to do alone,
Before I knew thy face.—Heaven bless thee,
boy !

Thy heart these two weeks has been beating
fast

With many hopes—It should be so—Yes—
yes—

I knew that thou couldst never have a wish
To leave me, Luke : thou hast been bound
to me

Only by links of love : when thou art gone,
What will be left to us !—But, I forget
My purposes. Lay now the corner-stone,
As I requested ; and hereafter, Luke,
When thou art gone away, should evil men
Be thy companions, think of me, my son,
And of this moment ; hither turn thy thoughts,
And God will strengthen thee : amid all fear
And all temptation, Luke, I pray that thou
Mayst bear in mind the life thy fathers lived,
Who, being innocent, did for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds. Now, fare thee
well—

When thou return'st, thou in this place wilt see
A work which is not here : a covenant
'Twill be between us——But, whatever fate
Befall thee, I shall love thee to the last,
And bear thy memory with me to the grave."

The shepherd ended here ; and Luke stooped
down,
And, as his father had requested, laid
The first stone of the sheep-fold. At the sight
The old man's grief broke from him ; to his
heart
He pressed his son, he kissèd him and wept ;
And to the house together they returned.

Hushed was that house in peace, or seeming
peace,
Ere the night fell ;—with morrow's dawn the
boy
Began his journey, and when he had reached
The public way, he put on a bold face ;
And all the neighbours as he passed their doors
Came forth with wishes and with farewell
prayers,
That followed him till he was out of sight.

A good report did from their kinsman come,
Of Luke and his well-doing : and the boy
Wrote loving letters, full of wondrous news,
Which, as the housewife phrased it, were
throughout

“The prettiest letters that were ever seen.”
Both parents read them with rejoicing hearts.
So, many months passed on : and once again
The shepherd went about his daily work
With confident and cheerful thoughts ; and now
Sometimes when he could find a leisure hour
He to that valley took his way, and there
Wrought at the sheep-fold. Meantime Luke
began

To slacken in his duty ; and at length
He in the dissolute city gave himself
To evil courses : ignominy and shame
Fell on him, so that he was driven at last
To seek a hiding-place beyond the seas.

There is a comfort in the strength of love ;
'Twill make a thing endurable, which else
Would overset the brain, or break the heart :
I have conversed with more than one who well
Remember the old man, and what he was
Years after he had heard this heavy news.
His bodily frame had been from youth to age
Of an unusual strength. Among the rocks
He went, and still looked up upon the sun,
And listened to the wind ; and as before
Performed all kinds of labour for his sheep,
And for the land his small inheritance.
And to that hollow dell from time to time
Did he repair, to build the fold of which
His flock had need. 'Tis not forgotten yet
The pity which was then in every heart
For the old man—and 'tis believed by all
That many and many a day he thither went,
And never lifted up a single stone.

There, by the sheep-fold, sometimes was
he seen
Sitting alone, with that his faithful dog,
Then old, beside him, lying at his feet.
The length of full seven years from time to time
He at the building of this sheep-fold wrought,
And left the work unfinished when he died.
Three years, or little more, did Isabel
Survive her husband : at her death the estate
Was sold, and went into a stranger's hand.

The cottage which was named the EVENING
STAR
Is gone—the ploughshare has been through
the ground
On which it stood ; great changes have been
wrought
In all the neighbourhood :—yet the oak is left
That grew beside their door ; and the remains
Of the unfinished sheep-fold may be seen
Beside the boisterous brook of Green-head
Ghyll.

1800.



POEMS ON THE NAMING OF PLACES.



ADVERTISEMENT.

By persons resident in the country and attached to rural objects, many places will be found unnamed or of unknown names, where little incidents must have occurred, or feelings been experienced, which will have given to such places a private and peculiar interest. From a wish to give some sort of record to such incidents, or renew the gratification of such feelings, names have been given to places by the author and some of his friends, and the following poems written in consequence.

I.

"IT WAS AN APRIL MORNING : FRESH AND
CLEAR."

It was an April morning : fresh and clear
The Rivulet, delighting in its strength,
Ran with a young man's speed ; and yet the voice
Of waters which the winter had supplied
Was softened down into a vernal tone.
The spirit of enjoyment and desire,



And hopes and wishes, from all living things
 Went circling, like a multitude of sounds.
 The budding groves appeared as if in haste
 To spur the steps of June ; as if their shades
 Of *various* green were hindrances that stood
 Between them and their object : yet, meanwhile,
 There was such deep contentment in the air,
 That every naked ash and tardy tree
 Yet leafless, seemed as though the countenance
 With which it looked on this delightful day
 Were native to the summer.—Up the brook
 I roamed in the confusion of my heart,
 Alive to all things and forgetting all.
 At length I to a sudden turning came
 In this continuous glen, where down a rock
 The Stream, so ardent in its course before,
 Sent forth such sallies of glad sound, that all
 Which I till then had heard, appeared the voice
 Of common pleasure : beast and bird, the lamb,
 The shepherd's dog, the linnet and the thrush
 Vied with this waterfall, and made a song
 Which, while I listened, seemed like the wild
 growth
 Or like some natural produce of the air,
 That could not cease to be. Green leaves
 were here ;
 But 'twas the foliage of the rocks, the birch,
 The yew, the holly, and the bright green thorn,
 With hanging islands of resplendent furze :
 And on a summit, distant a short space,

By any who should look beyond the dell,
A single mountain-cottage might be seen.
I gazed and gazed, and to myself I said,
"Our thoughts at least are ours; and this
 wild nook,
My EMMA, I will dedicate to thee."
Soon did the spot become my other home,
My dwelling, and my out-of-doors abode.
And, of the Shepherds who have seen me there,
To whom I sometimes in our idle talk
Have told this fancy, two or three, perhaps,
Years after we are gone and in our graves,
When they have cause to speak of this wild place,
May call it by the name of EMMA'S DELL.

1800.

II.

"THERE IS AN EMINENCE,—OF THESE
OUR HILLS."

THERE is an Eminence,—of these our hills
The last that parleys with the setting sun.
We can behold it from our orchard-seat;
And, when at evening we pursue our walk
Along the public way, this Peak so high
Above us, and so distant in its height,
Is visible; and often seems to send
Its own deep quiet to restore our hearts.

The meteors make of it a favourite haunt :
 The star of Jove, so beautiful and large
 In the mid heavens, is never half so fair
 As when he shines above it. 'Tis in truth
 The loneliest place we have among the clouds,
 And She who dwells with me, whom I have loved
 With such communion, that no place on earth
 Can ever be a solitude to me,
 Hath to this lonely summit given my name.

1800.

III.

"A NARROW GIRDLE OF ROUGH STONES AND CRAGS."

A NARROW girdle of rough stones and crags,
 A rude and natural causeway, interposed
 Between the water and a winding slope
 Of copse and thicket, leaves the eastern snore
 Of Grasmere safe in its own privacy.
 And there, myself and two beloved friends,
 One calm September morning, ere the mist
 Had altogether yielded to the sun,
 Sauntered on this retired and difficult way.
 Ill suits the road with one in haste, but we
 Played with our time; and, as we strolled along,
 It was our occupation to observe
 Such objects as the waves had tossed ashore,

Feather, or leaf, or weed, or withered bough,
Each on the other heaped, along the line
Of the dry wreck. And, in our vacant mood,
Not seldom did we stop to watch some tuft
Of dandelion seed or thistle's beard,
That skimmed the surface of the dead calm lake,
Suddenly halting now—a lifeless stand !
And starting off again with freak as sudden ;
In all its sportive wanderings, all the while,
Making report of an invisible breeze
That was its wings, its chariot, and its horse,
Its playmate, rather say its moving soul.
And often, trifling with a privilege
Alike indulged to all, we paused, one now,
And now the other, to point out, perchance
To pluck, some flower or water-weed, too fair
Either to be divided from the place
On which it grew, or to be left alone
To its own beauty. Many such there are,
Fair ferns and flowers, and chiefly that tall fern,
So stately, of the Queen Osmunda named ;
Plant lovelier in its own retired abode
On Grasmere's beach, than Naiad by the side
Of Grecian brook, or Lady of the Mere,
Sole-sitting by the shores of old romance.
So fared we that bright morning : from the fields,
Meanwhile, a noise was heard, the busy mirth
Of reapers, men and women, boys and girls.
Delighted much to listen to those sounds,
And feeding thus our fancies, we advanced

Along the indented shore ; when suddenly,
 Through a thin veil of glittering haze was seen
 Before us, on a point of jutting land,
 The tall and upright figure of a man
 Attired in peasant's garb, who stood alone,
 Angling beside the margin of the lake.
 "Improvident and reckless," we exclaimed,
 "The man must be, who thus can lose a day
 Of the mid-harvest, when the labourer's hire
 Is ample, and some little might be stored
 Wherewith to cheer him in the winter-time."
 Thus talking of that peasant, we approached
 Close to the spot where with his rod and line
 He stood alone ; whereat he turned his head
 To greet us—and we saw a man worn down
 By sickness, gaunt and lean, with sunken cheeks
 And wasted limbs, his legs so long and lean
 That for my single self I looked at them,
 Forgetful of the body they sustained.—
 Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
 The man was using his best skill to gain
 A pittance from the dead unfeeling lake
 That knew not of his wants. I will not say
 What thoughts immediately were ours, nor how
 The happy idleness of that sweet morn,
 With all its lovely images, was changed
 To serious musing and to self-reproach.
 Nor did we fail to see within ourselves
 What need there is to be reserved in speech,
 And temper all our thoughts with charity.

Therefore, unwilling to forget that day,
My friend, myself, and she who then received
The same admonishment, have called the place
By a memorial name, uncouth indeed
As e'er by mariner was given to bay
Or foreland, on a new-discovered coast ;
And Point Rash Judgment is the name it bears.

1800.



HART-LEAP WELL.

Hart-Leap Well is a small spring of water, about five miles from Richmond in Yorkshire, and near the side of the road that leads from Richmond to Askrigg. Its name is derived from a remarkable chase, the memory of which is preserved by the monuments spoken of in the second part of the following poem, which monuments do now exist as I have there described them.

THE knight had ridden down from Wensley
Moor

With the slow motion of a summer's cloud ;
He turned aside towards a vassal's door,
And " Bring another horse ! " he cried aloud.

" Another horse ! " — That shout the vassal
heard,

And saddled his best steed, a comely grey ;
Sir Walter mounted him ; he was the third
Which he had mounted on that glorious day.

Joy sparkled in the prancing courser's eyes ;
The horse and horseman are a happy pair ;
But though Sir Walter like a falcon flies,
There is a doleful silence in the air.

A rout this morning left Sir Walter's hall,
That as they galloped made the echoes roar ;
But horse and man are vanished one and all ;
Such race, I think, was never seen before.

Sir Walter, restless as a veering wind,
Calls to the few tired dogs that yet remain :
Blanch, Swift, and Music, noblest of their kind,
Follow, and up the weary mountain strain.

The knight hallooed, he cheered, and chid
 them on
With suppliant gestures and upbraidings stern ;
But breath and eyesight fail : and, one by one,
The dogs are stretched among the mountain
 fern.

Where is the throng, the tumult of the race ?
The bugles that so joyfully were blown ?
This chase it looks not like an earthly chase ;
Sir Walter and the hart are left alone.

The poor hart toils along the mountain side ;
I will not stop to tell how far he fled ;
Nor will I mention by what death he died ;
But now the knight beholds him lying dead.

Dismounting then, he leaned against a thorn ;
He had no follower, dog, nor man, nor boy :
He neither cracked his whip, nor blew his horn,
But gazed upon the spoil with silent joy.

Close to the thorn on which Sir Walter leaned,
Stood his dumb partner in this glorious feat :
Weak as a lamb the hour that it is yeaned ;
And white with foam as if with cleaving sleet.

Upon his side the hart was lying stretched ;
His nostril touched a spring beneath a hill,
And with the last deep groan his breath had
fetched

The waters of the spring were trembling still.

And now, too happy for repose or rest,
(Never had living man such joyful lot !)
Sir Walter walked all round, north, south, and
west,

And gazed and gazed upon that darling spot.

And climbing up the hill—(it was at least
Nine roods of sheer ascent) Sir Walter found
Three several hoof-marks which the hunted
beast

Had left imprinted on the grassy ground.

Sir Walter wiped his face, and cried, “ Till now
Such sight was never seen by living eyes :
Three leaps have borne him from this lofty brow
Down to the very fountain where he lies.

"I'll build a pleasure-house upon this spot,
And a small arbour, made for rural joy ;
'Twill be the traveller's shed, the pilgrim's cot,
A place of love for damsels that are coy.

"A cunning artist will I have to frame
A basin for that fountain in the dell !
And they who do make mention of the same,
From this day forth shall call it HART-LEAP
WELL.

"And, gallant stag ! to make thy praises known,
Another monument shall here be raised ;
Three several pillars, each a rough-hewn stone,
And planted where thy hoofs the turf have
grazed.

"And, in the summer-time when days are long,
I will come hither with my paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
We will make merry in that pleasant bower.

"Till the foundations of the mountains fail
My mansion with its arbour shall endure ;—
The joy of them who till the fields of Swale,
And them who dwell among the woods of Ure !"

Then home he went, and left the hart, stone-
dead,
With breathless nostrils stretched above the
spring.
Soon did the knight perform what he had said,
And far and wide the fame thereof did ring.

Ere thrice the moon into her port had steered,
A cup of stone received the living well ;
Three pillars of rude stone Sir Walter reared,
And built a house of pleasure in the dell.

And near the fountain, flowers of stature tall
With trailing plants and trees were inter-
twined,—

Which soon composed a little sylvan hall,
A leafy shelter from the sun and wind.

And thither, when the summer days were long,
Sir Walter led his wondering paramour ;
And with the dancers and the minstrel's song
Made merriment within that pleasant bower.

The knight, Sir Walter, died in course of time,
And his bones lie in his paternal vale.—
But there is matter for a second rhyme,
And I to this would add another tale.

PART II.

THE moving accident is not my trade,
To freeze the blood I have no ready arts :
'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts.

As I from Hawes to Richmond did repair,
It chanced that I saw standing in a dell
Three aspens at three corners of a square :
And one not four yards distant, near a well.

What this imported I could ill divine :
And pulling now the rein my horse to stop,
I saw three pillars standing in a line,
The last stone pillar on a dark hill-top.

The trees were grey, with neither arms nor head :
Half-wasted the square mound of tawny green ;
So that you just might say, as then I said,
“ Here in old time the hand of man hath been.”

I looked upon the hill both far and near,
More doleful place did never eye survey ;
It seemed as if the spring-time came not here,
And nature here were willing to decay.

I stood in various thoughts and fancies lost,
When one, who was in shepherd's garb attired,
Came up the hollow :—him did I accost,
And what this place might be I then inquired.

The shepherd stopped, and that same story told
Which in my former rhyme I have rehearsed.
“ A jolly place,” said he, “ in times of old !
But something ails it now ; the spot is cursed.

“ You see these lifeless stumps of aspen wood—
Some say that they are beeches, others elms—
These were the bower : and here a mansion
stood,
The finest palace of a hundred realms !

"The arbour does its own condition tell ;
You see the stones, the fountain, and the stream ;
But as to the great lodge ! you might as well
Hunt half a day for a forgotten dream.

"There's neither dog nor heifer, horse nor sheep,
Will wet his lips within that cup of stone ;
And oftentimes, when all are fast asleep,
This water doth send forth a dolorous groan.

"Some say that here a murder has been done
And blood cries out for blood : but, for my part,
I've guessed, when I've been sitting in the sun,
That it was all for that unhappy hart.

"What thoughts must through the creature's
brain have past !
Even from the topmost stone, upon the steep,
Are but three bounds—and look, sir, at this
last—

O master ! it has been a cruel leap.

"For thirteen hours he ran a desperate race ;
And in my simple mind we cannot tell
What cause the hart might have to love this
place,
And come and make his death-bed near the well.

"Here on the grass perhaps asleep he sank,
Lulled by this fountain in the summer-tide ;
This water was perhaps the first he drank
When he had wandered from his mother's side.

"In April here beneath the scented thorn
He heard the birds their morning carols sing ;
And he, perhaps, for aught we know, was born
Not half a furlong from that self-same spring.

"Now, here is neither grass nor pleasant shade ;
The sun on drearier hollow never shone ;
So will it be, as I have often said,
Till trees, and stones, and fountain, all are
gone."

"Gray-headed shepherd, thou hast spoken well ;
Small difference lies between thy creed and
mine :

This beast not unobserved by Nature fell ;
His death was mourned by sympathy divine.

"The Being that is in the clouds and air,
That is in the green leaves among the groves,
Maintains a deep and reverential care
For the unoffending creatures whom He loves.

"The pleasure-house is dust :—behind, before,
This is no common waste, no common gloom ;
But Nature, in due course of time, once more
Shall here put on her beauty and her bloom.

"She leaves these objects to a slow decay,
That what we are, and have been, may be
known ;
But, at the coming of the milder day,
These monuments shall all be overgrown.

“ One lesson, shepherd, let us two divide,
Taught both by what she shows, and what
conceals,
Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.
1800.



THE SPARROW'S NEST.

BEHOLD, within the leafy shade,
Those bright blue eggs together laid !
On me the chance-discovered sight
Gleamed like a vision of delight.
I started—seeming to espy
The home and sheltered bed,—
The Sparrow's dwelling, which, hard by
My Father's house, in wet or dry,
My sister Emmeline and I
Together visited.

She looked at it as if she feared it ;
Still wishing, dreading to be near it :
Such heart was in her, being then
A little prattler among men.
The Blessing of my later years
Was with me when a boy :
She gave me eyes, she gave me ears ;
And humble cares, and delicate fears ;
A heart, the fountain of sweet tears ;
And love, and thought, and joy.

*"MY HEART LEAPS UP WHEN I BE-
HOLD;" OR, THE RAINBOW.*

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky :
So was it when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man :
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die !
The Child is father of the Man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.

1802.



*"AMONG ALL LOVELY THINGS MY
LOVE HAD BEEN."*

AMONG all lovely things my Love had been ;
Had noted well the stars, all flowers that grew
About her home ; but she had never seen
A glow-worm, never one, and this I knew.

While riding near her home one stormy night
A single glow-worm did I chance to espy ;
I gave a fervent welcome to the sight,
And from my horse I leapt ; great joy had I.

Upon a leaf the glow-worm did I lay,
To bear it with me through the stormy night :
And, as before, it shone without dismay ;
Albeit putting forth a fainter light.

When to the dwelling of my Love I came,
I went into the orchard quietly ;
And left the glow-worm, blessing it by name,
Laid safely by itself, beneath a tree.

The whole next day I hoped, and hoped with
fear ;
At night the glow-worm shone beneath the tree ;
I led my Lucy to the spot, " Look here,"
Oh ! joy it was for her, and joy for me !

1802.



*TO THE SMALL CELANDINE.**

PANSIES, lilies, kingcups, daisies,
Let them live upon their praises ;
Long as there's a sun that sets
Primroses will have their glory ;
Long as there are violets,
They will have a place in story :
There's a flower that shall be mine,
'Tis the little Celandine.

Eyes of some men travel far
For the finding of a star ;

* Common Pilewort.

Up and down the heavens they go,
Men that keep a mighty rout !
I'm as great as they, I trow,
Since the day I found thee out,
Little Flower !—I'll make a stir
Like a great astronomer.

Modest, yet withal an Elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself ;
Since we needs must first have met
I have seen thee, high and low,
Thirty years or more, and yet
'Twas a face I did not know ;
Thou hast now, go where I may,
Fifty greetings in a day.

Ere a leaf is on a bush,
In the time before the thrush
Has a thought about its nest,
Thou wilt come with half a call,
Spreading out thy glossy breast
Like a careless Prodigal ;
Telling tales about the sun,
When we've little warmth, or none.

Poets, vain men in their mood !
Travel with the multitude ;
Never heed them ; I aver
That they all are wanton wooers ;
But the thrifty cottager,
Who stirs little out of doors,

Joys to spy thee near her home ;
Spring is coming, thou art come !

Comfort have thou of thy merit,
Kindly unassuming Spirit ;
Careless of thy neighbourhood,
Thou dost show thy pleasant face
On the moor, and in the wood,
In the lane—there's not a place,
Howsoever mean it be,
But 'tis good enough for thee.

Ill befall the yellow flowers,
Children of the flaring hours !
Buttercups, that will be seen
Whether we will see or no ;
Others, too, of lofty mien ;
They have done as worldlings do,
Taken praise that should be thine,
Little, humble Celandine !

Prophet of delight and mirth,
Scorned and slighted upon earth !
Herald of a mighty band,
Of a joyous train ensuing,
Singing at my heart's command,
In the lanes my thoughts pursuing,
I will sing, as doth behove,
Hymns in praise of what I love !

THE LEECH-GATHERER; OR, RESOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE.

I.

THERE was a roaring in the wind all night ;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods ;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright ;
The birds are singing in the distant woods ;
Over his own sweet voice the Stock-dove
 broods ;
The Jay makes answer as the Magpie chatters ;
And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of
 waters.

II.

All things that love the sun are out of doors :
The sky rejoices in the morning's birth ;
The grass is bright with rain-drops ;—on the
 moors
The hare is running races in her mirth ;
And with her feet she from the plashy earth
Raises a mist ; that, glittering in the sun,
Runs with her all the way, wherever she doth
 run.

III.

I was a traveller then upon the moor ;
I saw the hare that raced about with joy ;

I heard the woods, the distant waters, roar,
Or heard them not, as happy as a boy :
The pleasant season did my heart employ :
My old remembrances went from me wholly ;
And all the ways of men so vain and melan-
choly !

IV.

But, as it sometimes chanceth, from the might
Of joy in minds that can no further go,
As high as we have mounted in delight
In our dejection do we sink as low ;
To me that morning did it happen so ;
And fears, and fancies, thick upon me came ;
Dim sadness—and blind thoughts, I knew not,
nor could name.

V.

I heard the sky-lark warbling in the sky ;
And I bethought me of the playful hare :
Even such a happy Child of earth am I ;
Even as these blissful creatures do I fare ;
Far from the world I walk, and from all care ;
But there may come another day to me—
Solitude, pain of heart, distress, and poverty.

VI.

My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
As if life's business were a summer mood ;
As if all needful things would come unsought

To genial faith, still rich in genial good ;
But how can he expect that others should
Build for him, sow for him, and at his call
Love him, who for himself will take no heed at
all ?

VII.

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy,
The sleepless Soul that perished in his pride ;
Of Him who walked in glory and in joy
Following his plough, along the mountain-side :
By our own spirits we are deified :
We Poets in our youth begin in gladness ;
But thereof come in the end despondency and
madness.

VIII.

Now, whether it were by peculiar grace,
A leading from above, a something given,
Yet it befell, that, in this lonely place,
When I with these untoward thoughts had
striven,
Beside a pool bare to the eye of heaven
I saw a Man before me unawares :
The oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray
hairs.

IX.

As a huge stone is sometimes seen to lie
Couched on the bald top of an eminence ;
Wonder to all who do the same espy,

By what means it could thither come, and
whence ;
So that it seems a thing endued with sense :
Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
Of rock or sand repositeth, there to sun itself ;

X.

Such seemed this man, not all alive nor dead,
Nor all asleep—in his extreme old age :
His body was bent double, feet and head
Coming together in life's pilgrimage ;
As if some dire constraint of pain, or rage
Of sickness felt by him in times long past,
A more than human weight upon his frame had
cast.

XI.

Himself he propped, his body, limbs, and face,
Upon a long gray staff of shaven wood :
And, still as I drew near with gentle pace,
Upon the margin of that moorish flood
Motionless as a cloud the old man stood ;
That heareth not the loud winds when they
call ;
And moveth altogether, if it move at all.

XII.

At length, himself unsettling, he the pond
Stirred with his staff, and fixedly did look
Upon the muddy water, which he conned,

As if he had been reading in a book :
And now a stranger's privilege I took ;
And, drawing to his side, to him did say,
" This morning gives us promise of a glorious
day."

XIII.

A gentle answer did the old man make,
In courteous speech which forth he slowly drew :
And him with further words I thus bespake,
" What occupation do you there pursue ?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
He answered, while a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet vivid eyes.

XIV.

His words came feebly, from a feeble chest,
But each in solemn order followed each,
With something of a lofty utterance drest ;
Choice word, and measured phrase, above the
reach
Of ordinary men ; a stately speech ;
Such as grave livers do in Scotland use,
Religious men, who give to God and man their
dues.

XV.

He told, that to these waters he had come
To gather leeches, being old and poor :
Employment hazardous and wearisome !

And he had many hardships to endure :
From pond to pond he roamed, from moor to
moor ;
Housing, with God's good help, by choice of
chance ;
And in this way he gained an honest maintenance.

XVI.

The old man still stood talking by my side ;
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarce heard ; nor word from word could I
divide ;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream ;
Or like a man from some far region sent,
To give me human strength, by apt admonishment.

XVII.

My former thoughts returned : the fear that kills ;
And hope that is unwilling to be fed ;
Cold, pain, and labour, and all fleshly ills ;
And mighty Poets in their misery dead.
Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
“How is it that you live, and what is it you do?”

XVIII.

He with a smile did then his words repeat ;
And said, that, gathering leeches, far and wide

He travelled ; stirring thus about his feet
The waters of the pools where they abide.
"Once I could meet with them on every side ;
But they have dwindled long by slow decay ;
Yet still I persevere, and find them where I
may."

XIX.

While he was talking thus, the lonely place,
The old man's shape, and speech, all troubled
me :
In my mind's eye I seemed to see him pace
About the weary moors continually,
Wandering about alone and silently.
While I these thoughts within myself pursued,
He, having made a pause, the same discourse
renewed.

XX.

And soon with this he other matter blended,
Cheerfully uttered, with demeanour kind,
But stately in the main ; and when he ended,
I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
"God," said I, "be my help and stay secure ;
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely
moor !"

A FAREWELL.

FAREWELL, thou little Nook of mountain
ground,

Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare ;
Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
The loveliest spot that man hath ever found,
Farewell !—we leave thee to Heaven's peaceful
care,

Thee, and the Cottage which thou dost
surround.

Our boat is safely anchored by the shore,
And safely she will ride when we are gone ;
The flowering shrubs that decorate our door
Will prosper, though untended and alone :
Fields, goods, and far-off chattels we have none :
These narrow bounds contain our private store
Of things earth makes and sun doth shine upon ;
Here they are in our sight—we have no more.

Sunshine and shower be with you, bud and bell !
For two months now in vain we shall be sought ;
We leave you here in solitude to dwell
With these our latest gifts of tender thought ;
Thou, like the morning, in thy saffron coat,
Bright gowan, and marsh-marigold, farewell !
Whom from the borders of the Lake we brought,
And placed together near our rocky Well.

We go for One to whom ye will be dear ;
And she will prize this bower, this Indian shed,
Our own contrivance, building without peer !
A gentle Maid, whose heart is lowly bred,
Whose pleasures are in wild fields gathered,
With joyousness, and with a thoughtful cheer,
Will come to you ; to you herself will wed—
And love the blessed life that we lead here.

Dear spot ! which we have watched with tender
 heed,
Bringing thee chosen plants and blossoms blown
Among the distant mountains, flower and weed,
Which thou hast taken to thee as thy own,
Making all kindness registered and known ;
Thou for our sakes, though Nature's child
 indeed,
Fair in thyself and beautiful alone,
Hast taken gifts which thou dost little need.

And oh, most constant, yet most fickle Place,
That hast thy wayward moods, as thou dost
 show
To them who look not daily on thy face ;
Who, being loved, in love no bounds dost know,
And say'st when we forsake thee, " Let them
 go ! "
Thou easy-hearted Thing, with thy wild race
Of weeds and flowers, till we return be slow,
And travel with the year at a soft pace.

Help us to tell Her tales of years gone by,
And this sweet spring the best beloved and best.
Joy will be flown in its mortality ;
Something must stay to tell us of the rest.
Here, thronged with primroses, the steep rock's
breast

Glittered at evening like a starry sky ;
And in this bush our sparrow built her nest,
Of which I sung one song that will not die.

Oh, happy Garden ! whose seclusion deep
Hath been so friendly to industrious hours ;
And to soft slumbers, that did gently steep
Our spirits, carrying with them dreams of
flowers,
And wild notes warbled among leafy bowers ;
Two burning months let summer overleap,
And, coming back with her who will be ours,
Into thy bosom we again shall creep.

1802.



STANZAS

WRITTEN IN MY POCKET-COPY OF THOMSON'S
"CASTLE OF INDOLENCE."

WITHIN our happy Castle there dwelt One
Whom without blame I may not overlook ;
For never sun on living creature shone
Who more devout enjoyment with us took :

Here on his hours he hung as on a book ;
On his own time here would he float away,
As doth a fly upon a summer brook ;
But go to-morrow—or belike to-day—
Seek for him,—he is fled ; and whither none
can say.

Thus often would he leave our peaceful home,
And find elsewhere his business or delight ;
Out of our Valley's limits did he roam :
Full many a time, upon a stormy night,
His voice came to us from the neighbouring
height :

Oft did we see him driving full in view
At mid-day when the sun was shining bright ;
What ill was on him, what he had to do,
A mighty wonder bred among our quiet crew.

Ah ! piteous sight it was to see this Man
When he came back to us, a withered flower,—
Or like a sinful creature, pale and wan.
Down would he sit ; and without strength or
power

Look at the common grass from hour to hour :
And oftentimes, how long I fear to say,
Where apple-trees in blossom made a bower,
Retired in that sunshiny shade he lay :
And, like a naked Indian, slept himself away.

Great wonder to our gentle tribe it was
Whenever from our Valley he withdrew ;

For happier soul no living creature has
Than he had, being here the long day through.
Some thought he was a lover, and did woo :
Some thought far worse of him, and judged
him wrong :

But verse was what he had been wedded to ;
And his own mind did like a tempest strong
Come to him thus, and drove the weary Wight
along.

With him there often walked in friendly guise,
Or lay upon the moss by brook or tree,
A noticeable Man with large gray eyes,
And a pale face that seemed undoubtedly
As if a blooming face it ought to be ;
Heavy his low-hung lip did oft appear
Deprest by weight of musing phantasy ;
Profound his forehead was, though not severe ;
Yet some did think that he had little business
here.

Sweet heaven forefend ! his was a lawful right ;
Noisy he was, and gamesome as a boy ;
His limbs would toss about him with delight
Like branches when strong winds the trees
annoy.

Nor lacked his calmer hours device or toy
To banish listlessness and irksome care ;
He would have taught you how you might
employ

Yourself ; and many did to him repair,—
And, certes, not in vain ; he had inventions
rare.

Expedients, too, of simplest sort he tried :
Long blades of grass, plucked round him as
he lay,
Made—to his ear attentively applied—
A pipe on which the wind would deftly play ;
Glasses he had, that little things display,
The beetle panoplied in gems and gold,
A mailèd angel on a battle day ;
The mysteries that cups of flowers infold,
And all the gorgeous sights which fairies do
behold.

He would entice that other man to hear
His music, and to view his imagery :
And, sooth, these two did love each other dear,
As far as love in such a place could be ;
There did they dwell—from earthly labour free,
As happy spirits as were ever seen ;
If but a bird, to keep them company,
Or butterfly sate down, they were, I ween,
As pleased as if the same had been a maiden
queen.

TO H. C., SIX YEARS OLD.*

O THOU! whose fancies from afar are brought;
Who of thy words dost make a mock apparel,
And fittest to unutterable thought
The breeze-like motion and the self-born carol;
Thou faery voyager! that dost float,
In such clear water, that thy boat
May rather seem
To brood on air than on an earthly stream;
Suspended in a stream as clear as sky
Where earth and heaven do make one imagery!
O blessed vision! happy child!
That art so exquisitely wild,
I think of thee with many fears
For what may be thy lot in future years.
I thought of times when pain might be thy
 guest,
Lord of thy house and hospitality!
And grief, uneasy lover! never rest
But when she sate within the touch of thee.
Oh! too industrious folly!
Oh! vain and causeless melancholy!
Nature will either end thee quite;
Or, lengthening out thy season of delight,
Preserve for thee, by individual right,
A young lamb's heart among the full-grown
 flocks.

* Hartley Coleridge.

What hast thou to do with sorrow,
Or the injuries of to-morrow ?
Thou art a dewdrop, which the morn brings
 forth,
Ill fitted to sustain unkindly shocks ;
Or to be trailed along the soiling earth !
A gem that glitters while it lives,
And no forewarning gives ;
But, at the touch of wrong, without a strife
Slips in a moment out of life.

1802.

*TO THE DAISY.*

" Her * divine skill taught me this,
That from every thing I saw
I could some instruction draw,
And raise pleasure to the height
Through the meanest object's sight.
By the murmur of a spring,
Or the least bough's rustelling ;
By a Daisy whose leaves spread
Shut when Titan goes to bed ;
Or a shady bush or tree ;
She could more infuse in me
Than all Nature's beauties can
In some other wiser man."—G. WITHER.

IN youth from rock to rock I went,
From hill to hill in discontent

* His Muse.

Of pleasure high and turbulent,
 Most pleased when most uneasy ;
But now my own delights I make,—
My thirst at every rill can slake,
And gladly Nature's love partake
 Of thee, sweet Daisy !

Thee Winter in the garland wears
That thinly decks his few gray hairs ;
Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee ;
Whole Summer-fields are thine by right ;
And Autumn, melancholy Wight !
Doth in thy crimson head delight
 When rains are on thee.

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greet'st the traveller in the lane ;
Pleased at his greeting thee again ;
 Yet nothing daunted,
Nor grieved if thou be set at nought :
And oft alone in nooks remote
We meet thee, like a pleasant thought,
 When such are wanted.

Be violets in their sacred mews
The flowers the wanton Zephyrs choose ;
Proud be the rose, with rains and dews
 Her head impearling ;
Thou liv'st with less ambitious aim,
Yet hast not gone without thy fame ;

Thou art indeed by many a claim
The Poet's darling.

If to a rock from rains he fly,
Or, some bright day of April sky,
Imprisoned by hot sunshine lie
Near the green holly,
And wearily at length should fare ;
He needs but look about, and there
Thou art !—a friend at hand, to scare
His melancholy.

A hundred times, by rock or bower,
Ere thus I have lain couched an hour,
Have I derived from thy sweet power
Some apprehension ;
Some steady love ; some brief delight ;
Some memory that had taken flight ;
Some chime of fancy wrong or right ;
Or stray invention.

If stately passions in me burn,
And one chance look to thee should turn,
I drink out of an humbler urn
A lowlier pleasure ;
The homely sympathy that heeds
The common life, our nature breeds ;
A wisdom fitted to the needs
Of hearts at leisure.

Fresh-smitten by the morning ray,
When thou art up, alert and gay,

Then, cheerful Flower ! my spirits play
With kindred gladness :
And when, at dusk, by dews opprest
Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
Hath often eased my pensive breast
Of careful sadness.

And all day long I number yet,
All seasons through, another debt,
Which I, wherever thou art met,
To thee am owing ;
An instinct call it, a blind sense ;
A happy, genial influence,
Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
Nor whither going.

Child of the Year ! that round dost run
Thy pleasant course, when day's begun,
As ready to salute the sun
As lark or leveret,
Thy long-lost praise thou shalt regain ;
Nor be less dear to future men
Than in old time ;—thou not in vain,
Art Nature's favourite.

1802.



THE GREEN LINNET.

BENEATH these fruit-tree boughs that shed
Their snow-white blossoms on my head,

With brightest sunshine round me spread
Of spring's unclouded weather,
In this sequestered nook how sweet
To sit upon my orchard-seat !
And birds and flowers once more to greet,
My last year's friends together.

One have I marked, the happiest guest
In all this covert of the blest ;
Hail to Thee, far above the rest
In joy of voice and pinion,
Thou, linnet ! in thy green array,
Presiding Spirit here to-day,
Dost lead the revels of the May,
And this is thy dominion.

While birds, and butterflies, and flowers
Make all one band of paramours,
Thou, ranging up and down the bowers,
Art sole in thy employment ;
A Life, a Presence like the Air,
Scattering thy gladness without care,
Too blest with any one to pair,
Thyself thy own enjoyment.

Upon yon tuft of hazel trees,
That twinkle to the gusty breeze,
Behold him perched in ecstasies,
Yet seeming still to hover ;
There ! where the flutter of his wings
Upon his back and body flings

Shadows and sunny glimmerings,
That cover him all over.

My dazzled sight he oft deceives,
A brother of the dancing leaves ;
Then flits, and from the cottage eaves
Pours forth his song in gushes ;
As if by that exulting strain
He mocked and treated with disdain
The voiceless Form he chose to feign,
While fluttering in the bushes.

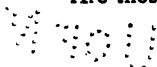
1803.



YEW-TREES.

THERE is a yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore,
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths ; or those that crossed
the sea

And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree !—a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay ;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,



Joined in one solemn and capacious grove ;
Huge trunks !—and each particular trunk a
growth

Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved,—
Nor uninformed with phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane ;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries, ghostly shapes
May meet at noontide—Fear and trembling
Hope,

Silence and Foresight—Death the Skeleton,
And Time the Shadow,—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship ; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

1803.

TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803.



TO A HIGHLAND GIRL.

(AT INVERSNAID, UPON LOCH LOMOND.)

SWEET Highland Girl, a very shower
Of beauty is thy earthly dower !
Twice seven consenting years have shed
Their utmost bounty on thy head :
And these gray rocks ; this household Lawn ;
These trees, a veil just half withdrawn ;
This fall of water, that doth make
A murmur near the silent lake ;
This little bay, a quiet road
That holds in shelter thy Abode ;
In truth together do ye seem
Like something fashioned in a dream ;
Such forms as from their covert peep
When earthly cares are laid asleep !
But, O fair Creature ! in the light
Of common day, so heavenly bright,
I bless thee, Vision as thou art,
I bless thee with a human heart :
God shield thee to thy latest years !
Thee, neither know I, nor thy peers ;
And yet my eyes are filled with tears.

With earnest feeling I shall pray
For thee when I am far away ;
For never saw I mien, or face,
In which more plainly I could trace
Benignity and home-bred sense
Ripening in perfect innocence.
Here scattered like a random seed,
Remote from men, thou dost not need
The embarrassed look of shy distress,
And maidenly shamefacedness :
Thou wear'st upon thy forehead clear
The freedom of a Mountaineer.
A face with gladness overspread !
Soft smiles, by human kindness bred !
And seemliness complete, that sways
Thy courtesies, about thee plays ;
With no restraint, but such as springs
From quick and eager visitings
Of thoughts, that lie beyond the reach
Of thy few words of English speech :
A bondage sweetly brooked, a strife
That gives thy gestures grace and life !
So have I, not unmoved in mind,
Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
Thus beating up against the wind.

What hand but would a garland cull
For thee, who art so beautiful ?
Oh, happy pleasure ! here to dwell
Beside thee in some heathy dell ;

Adopt your homely ways and dress,
A Shepherd, thou a Shepherdess !
But I could frame a wish for thee
More like a grave reality :
Thou art to me but as a wave
Of the wild sea : and I would have
Some claim upon thee, if I could,
Though but of common neighbourhood.
What joy to hear thee, and to see !
Thy elder Brother I would be,
Thy Father—anything to thee !

Now thanks to Heaven ! that of its grace
Hath led me to this lonely place.
Joy have I had ; and going hence
I bear away my recompense.
In spots like these it is we prize
Our memory, feel that she hath eyes :
Then, why should I be loth to stir ?
I feel this place was made for her ;
To give new pleasure like the past,
Continued long as life shall last.
Nor am I loth, though pleased at heart,
Sweet Highland girl ! from thee to part,
For I, methinks, till I grow old,
As fair before me shall behold,
As I do now, the cabin small,
The lake, the bay, the waterfall ;
And thee, the spirit of them all !

*GLEN-ALMAIN, OR THE NARROW
GLEN.*

IN this still place, remote from men,
Sleeps Ossian, in the NARROW GLEN ;
In this still place, where murmurs on
But one meek streamlet, only one :
He sang of battles, and the breath
Of stormy war, and violent death ;
And should, methinks, when all was past,
Have rightfully been laid at last
Where rocks were rudely heaped, and rent
As by a spirit turbulent ;
Where sights were rough, and sounds were wild,
And every thing unreconciled ;
In some complaining, dim retreat,
For fear and melancholy meet ;
But this is calm ; there cannot be
A more entire tranquillity.

Does then the Bard sleep here indeed ?
Or is it but a groundless creed !
What matters it ?—I blame them not
Whose Fancy in this lonely spot
Was moved ; and in such way expressed
Their notion of its perfect rest.
A convent, even a hermit's cell
Would break the silence of this Dell :
It is not quiet, is not ease ;
But something deeper far than these :

The separation that is here
Is of the grave ; and of austere
Yet happy feelings of the dead :
And, therefore, was it rightly said
That Ossian, last of all his race !
Lies buried in this lonely place.

1803.



STEPPING WESTWARD.

[While my fellow-traveller and I were walking by the side of Loch Katrine, one fine evening after sunset, on our road to a hut where, in the course of our tour, we had been hospitably entertained some weeks before, we met, in one of the loneliest parts of that solitary region, two well-dressed women, one of whom said to us, by way of greeting, "What ! you are stepping westward?"]

"*WHAT ! you are stepping westward ?*"—"Yea."

'Twould be a *wildish* destiny,
If we, who thus together roam
In a strange Land, and far from home,
Were in this place the guests of Chance :
Yet who would stop, or fear to advance,
Though home or shelter he had none,
With such a sky to lead him on ?

The dewy ground was dark and cold ;
Behind, all gloomy to behold ;

And stepping westward seemed to be
A kind of *heavenly* destiny ;
I liked the greeting ; 'twas a sound
Of something without place or bound ;
And seemed to give me spiritual right
To travel through that region bright.

The voice was soft, and she who spake
Was walking by her native lake :
The salutation had to me
The very sound of courtesy :
Its power was felt ; and while my eye
Was fixed upon the glowing Sky,
The echo of the voice inwrought
A human sweetness with the thought
Of travelling through the world that lay
Before me in my endless way.

1803.



THE SOLITARY REAPER.

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland lass !
Reaping and singing by herself ;
Stop here, or gently pass !
Alone she cuts, and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain ;
Oh, listen ! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No nightingale did ever chant
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands :
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago :
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again !

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending ;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending ;—
I listened till I had my fill ;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.



ADDRESS TO KILCHURN CASTLE,
UPON LOCH AWE.

“ From the top of the hill a most impressive scene opened upon our view,—a ruined castle on an island at some distance from the shore, backed by a cove of the mountain Cruachan, down which came a foaming stream. The castle occupied every foot of the island that was visible to us, appearing to rise out of the water,—mists rested upon the mountain-side, with spots of sunshine ; there was a mild desolation in the low-grounds, a solemn grandeur in the mountains, and the castle was wild, yet stately—not dismantled of turrets—nor the walls broken down, though obviously a ruin.”—*Extract from the Journal of my Companion.*

CHILD of loud-throated War ! the mountain
stream

Roars in thy hearing ; but thy hour of rest
Is come, and thou art silent in thy age ;
Save when the winds sweep by and sounds
are caught

Ambiguous, neither wholly thine nor theirs.
Oh ! there is life that breathes not ; Powers
there are

That touch each other to the quick in modes
Which the gross world no sense hath to perceive,

No soul to dream of. What art thou, from
care

Cast off—abandoned by thy rugged Sire,

Nor by soft Peace adopted ; though, in place
And in dimension, such that thou mightst seem
But a mere footstool to yon sovereign Lord,
Huge Cruachan (a thing that meaner hills
Might crush, nor know that it had suffered
harm) ;

Yet he, not loth, in favour of thy claims
To reverence suspends his own ; submitting
All that the God of Nature hath conferred,
All that he has in common with the stars,
To the memorial majesty of Time
Impersonated in thy calm decay !

Take, then, thy seat, Vicegerent unreprieved !
Now, while a farewell gleam of evening light
Is fondly lingering on thy shattered front,
Do thou, in turn, be paramount ; and rule
Over the pomp and beauty of a scene
Whose mountains, torrents, lake, and woods,
unite

To pay thee homage ; and with these are joined,
In willing admiration and respect,
Two Hearts, which in thy presence might be
called

Youthful as Spring. Shade of departed Power ;
Skeleton of unfleshed humanity,
The chronicle were welcome that should call
Into the compass of distinct regard
The toils and struggles of thy infancy !
Yon foaming flood seems motionless as ice ;

Its dizzy turbulence eludes the eye,
Frozen by distance ; so, majestic Pile,
To the perception of this Age, appear
Thy fierce beginnings, softened and subdued
And quieted in character ; the strife,
The pride, the fury uncontrollable,
Lost on the ærial heights of the Crusades !

1803.



COMPOSED AT — CASTLE.

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc (for with such disease
Fame taxes him) that he could send forth word,
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient dome, and towers like these,
Beggared and outraged!—Many hearts de-
plored

The fate of those old Trees ; and oft with pain
The traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to
heed :

For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

1803.

YARROW UNVISITED.

[See the various poems the scene of which is laid upon the banks of the Yarrow ; in particular, the exquisite ballad of Hamilton, beginning—

“ Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny bonny bride,
Busk ye, busk ye, my winsome marrow ! ”]

FROM Stirling Castle we had seen
The mazy Forth unravelled ;
Had trod the banks of Clyde, and Tay,
And with the Tweed had travelled ;
And when we came to Clovenford,
Then said my “ *winsome marrow*,”
“ Whate’er betide, we’ll turn aside,
And see the Braes of Yarrow.”

“ Let Yarrow folk, *frae* Selkirk town,
Who have been buying, selling,
Go back to Yarrow, ’tis their own ;
Each maiden to her dwelling !
On Yarrow’s banks let herons feed,
Hares couch, and rabbits burrow !
But we will downwards with the Tweed,
Nor turn aside to Yarrow.

“ There’s Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryburgh, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There’s pleasant Tiviotdale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow :

Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

“What’s Yarrow but a river bare,
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere
As worthy of your wonder.”
Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn :
My true love sighed for sorrow :
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !

“Oh ! green,” said I, “are Yarrow’s holms,
And sweet is Yarrow flowing !
Fair hangs the apple frae the rock,
But we will leave it growing.
O’er hilly path, and open strath,
We’ll wander Scotland thorough ;
But, though so near, we will not turn
Into the dale of Yarrow.

“Let beeves and home-bred kine partake
The sweets of Burn-mill meadow ;
The swan on still St. Mary’s Lake
Float double, swan and shadow !
We will not see them ; will not go,
To-day, nor yet to-morrow ;
Enough if in our hearts we know
There’s such a place as Yarrow.

“Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown !
It must, or we shall rue it :

We have a vision of our own ;
Ah ! why should we undo it ?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome marrow !
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow !

“ If Care, with freezing years should come,
And wandering seem but folly,—
Should we be loth to stir from home,
And yet be melancholy ;
Should life be dull, and spirits low,
'Twill soothe us in our sorrow,
That earth has something yet to show,
The bonny holms of Yarrow ! ”

1803.



IN THE PASS OF KILLICRANKIE,

AN INVASION BEING EXPECTED, OCTOBER 1803.

SIX thousand veterans practised in war's game,
Tried men at Killicrankie were arrayed
Against an equal host that wore the plaid,
Shepherds and herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind
came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like
flame ;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain
road,

Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath
the load

Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh, for a single hour of that Dundee,
Who on that day the word of onset gave !
Like conquest would the men of England see ;
And her foes find a like inglorious grave.

1803.



TO THE CUCKOO.

O BLITHE new-comer ! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo ! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice ?

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring !
Even yet thou art to me

No bird : but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery.

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to ; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green ;
And thou wert still a hope, a love ;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet ;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd Bird ! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faëry place ;
That is fit home for Thee !

804.



*"SHE WAS A PHANTOM OF
DELIGHT."*

SHE was a Phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight ;
A lovely Apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;

Her eyes as stars of Twilight fair ;
Like Twilight's too, her dusky hair ;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful Dawn ;
A dancing Shape, an Image gay,
To haunt, to startle, and way-lay.

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too !
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin-liberty ;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet ;
A Creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food ;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine ;
A Being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller between life and death ;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill,
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command ;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

*THE DAFFODILS ; OR, "I WANDERED
LONELY AS A CLOUD."*

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils ;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay :
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee :—
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company :
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought :

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

THE AFFLICTION OF MARGARET.

I.

WHERE art thou, my beloved Son,
Where art thou, worse to me than dead ?
Oh, find me, prosperous or undone !
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,
Why am I ignorant of the same,
That I may rest ; and neither blame
Nor sorrow may attend thy name ?

II.

Seven years, alas ! to have received
No tidings of an only child ;
To have despaired, and have believed
And be for evermore beguiled ;
Sometimes with thoughts of very bliss !
I catch at them and then I miss ;
Was ever darkness like to this ?

III.

He was among the prime in worth,
An object beauteous to behold ;
Well born, well bred ; I sent him forth
Ingenuous, innocent, and bold :
If things ensued that wanted grace,
As hath been said, they were not base ;
And never blush was on my face.

IV.

Ah ! little doth the young one dream,
When full of play and childish cares,
What power hath even his wildest scream,
Heard by his mother unawares !
He knows it not, he cannot guess :
Years to a mother bring distress ;
But do not make her love the less.

V.

Neglect me ! no, I suffered long
From that ill thought ; and, being blind,
Said, "Pride shall help me in my wrong :
Kind mother have I been, as kind
As ever breathed : " and that is true ;
I've wet my path with tears like dew,
Weeping for him when no one knew.

VI.

My Son, if thou be humbled, poor,
Hopeless of honour and of gain,
Oh ! do not dread thy mother's door ;
Think not of me with grief and pain :
I now can see with better eyes ;
And worldly grandeur I despise,
And fortune with her gifts and lies.

VII.

Alas ! the fowls of heaven have wings,
And blasts of heaven will aid their flight ;

They mount, how short a voyage brings
The wanderers back to their delight !
Chains tie us down by land and sea ;
And wishes, vain as mine, may be
All that is left to comfort thee.

VIII.

Perhaps some dungeon hears thee groan,
Maimed, mangled by inhuman men ;
Or thou upon a desert thrown
Inheritest the lion's den ;
Or hast been summoned to the deep,
Thou, thou, and all thy mates, to keep
An incommunicable sleep.

IX.

I look for ghosts ; but none will force
Their way to me :—'tis falsely said
That there was ever intercourse
Betwixt the living and the dead ;
For, surely, then I should have sight
Of him I wait for day and night,
With love and longings infinite.

X.

My apprehensions come in crowds ;
I dread the rustling of the grass ;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass :
I question things and do not find

One that will answer to my mind ;
And all the world appears unkind.

XI.

Beyond participation lie
My troubles, and beyond relief :
If any chance to heave a sigh,
They pity me and not my grief.
Then come to me, my son, or send
Some tidings that my woes may end ;
I have no other earthly friend.

1804.

*ODE TO DUTY.*

STERN daughter of the voice of God !
O Duty ! if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove ;
Thou who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe ;
From vain temptations dost set free ;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them ; who, in love and truth
Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth ;
Glad Hearts ! without reproach or blot ;
Who do thy work, and know it not :

Oh ! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power !
 around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed ;
Yet find that other strength, according to their
 need.

I, loving freedom, and untried ;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust :
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray ;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if
 I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control ;
But in the quietness of thought :
Me this unchartered freedom tires ;
I feel the weight of chance-desires :

My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face :
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds ;
And fragrance in thy footing treads ;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee,
are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power !
I call thee : I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour ;
Oh, let my weakness have an end !
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice ;
The confidence of reason give ;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me
live !

1805.



ELEGIAC STANZAS,

SUGGESTED BY A PICTURE OF PEELE CASTLE, IN A
STORM, PAINTED BY SIR GEORGE BEAUMONT.

I WAS thy neighbour once, thou rugged Pile !
Four summer weeks I dwelt in sight of thee :

I saw thee every day ; and all the while
Thy Form was sleeping on a glassy sea.

So pure the sky, so quiet was the air !
So like, so very like, was day to day !
Whene'er I looked, thy Image still was there ;
It trembled, but it never passed away.

How perfect was the calm ! it seemed no
sleep ;
No mood which season takes away or brings :
I could have fancied that the mighty Deep
Was even the gentlest of all gentle Things.

Ah ! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's
hand,
To express what then I saw ; and add the
gleam,
The light that never was, on sea or land,
The consecration, and the Poet's dream ;

I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile !
Amid a world how different from this !
Beside a sea that could not cease to smile ;
On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss,

Thou shouldst have seemed a treasure-house
divine
Of peaceful years ; a chronicle of heaven ;—
Of all the sunbeams that did ever shine
The very sweetest had to thee been given.

A Picture had it been of lasting ease,
Elysian quiet, without toil or strife ;
No motion but the moving tide, a breeze,
Or merely silent Nature's breathing life.

Such, in the fond illusion of my heart,
Such Picture would I at that time have made :
And seen the soul of truth in every part ;
A steadfast peace that might not be betrayed.

So once it would have been,—'tis so no more ;
I have submitted to a new control :
A power is gone, which nothing can restore ;
A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.

Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been :
The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old ;
This, which I know, I speak with mind serene.

Then, Beaumont, Friend ! who would have
 been the Friend
If he had lived, of Him whom I deplore,
This work of thine I blame not, but commend ;
This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.

Oh, 'tis a passionate Work !—yet wise and
 well ;
Well chosen is the spirit that is here ;
That Hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear !

And this huge Castle, standing here sublime,
I love to see the look with which it braves,
Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time,
The lightning, the fierce wind, and trampling
waves.

Farewell, farewell, the heart that lives alone,
Housed in a dream, at distance from the Kind!
Such happiness, wherever it be known,
Is to be pitied ; for 'tis surely blind.

But welcome fortitude, and patient cheer,
And frequent sights of what is to be borne !
Such sights, or worse, as are before me
here.—

Not without hope we suffer and we mourn.

1805.



LOUISA.

I MET Louisa in the shade ;
And having seen that lovely maid,
Why should I fear to say
That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong ;
And down the rocks can leap along,
Like rivulets in May ?

And she hath smiles to earth unknown ;
Smiles, that with motion of their own

Do spread, and sink, and rise ;
That come and go with endless play,
And ever, as they pass away,
Are hidden in her eyes.

She loves her fire, her cottage-home ;
Yet o'er the moorland will she roam
In weather rough and bleak ;
And, when against the wind she strains,
Oh, might I kiss the mountain rains,
That sparkle on her cheek !

Take all that's mine "beneath the moon,"
If I with her but half a noon
May sit beneath the walls
Of some old cave, or mossy nook,
When up she winds along the brook
To hunt the waterfalls.

1805.



TO A YOUNG LADY,

WHO HAD BEEN REPROACHED FOR TAKING LONG
WALKS IN THE COUNTRY.

DEAR Child of Nature, let them rail !
There is a nest in a green dale,
A harbour and a hold,
Where thou, a Wife and Friend, shalt see
Thy own delightful days, and be
A light to young and old.

There, healthy as a shepherd-boy,
And treading among flowers of joy,
That at no season fade,
Thou, while thy babes around thee cling,
Shalt show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

Thy thoughts and feelings shall not die,
Nor leave thee, when grey hairs are nigh,
A melancholy slave ;
But an old age serene and bright,
And lovely as a Lapland night,
Shall lead thee to thy grave.

1805.



FRENCH REVOLUTION,

AS IT APPEARED TO ENTHUSIASTS AT ITS COMMENCE-
MENT. REPRINTED FROM "THE FRIEND."

OH ! pleasant exercise of hope and joy !
For mighty were the auxiliars, which then
stood

Upon our side, we who were strong in love !
Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven !—Oh !
times,

In which the meagre, stale, forbidding ways
Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
The attraction of a country in romance !

When Reason seemed the most to assert her
rights,
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress—to assist the work,
Which then was going forward in her name !
Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,
The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
(To take an image which was felt no doubt
Among the bowers of paradise itself)
The budding rose above the rose full blown.
What temper at the prospect did not wake
To happiness unthought of ? The inert
Were roused, and lively natures rapt away !
They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
The playfellows of fancy, who had made
All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
Their ministers,—who in lordly wise had stirred
Among the grandest objects of the sense,
And dealt with whatsoever they found there
As if they had within some lurking right,
To wield it ;—they, too, who of gentle mood
Had watched all gentle motions, and to these
Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more
mild,
And in the region of their peaceful selves ;—
Now was it that *both* found, the meek and lofty
Did both find helpers to their heart's desire,
And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish,—
Were called upon to exercise their skill,
Not in Utopia,—subterraneous fields,—

Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where !
But in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us,—the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all !

1805.



*CHARACTER OF THE HAPPY
WARRIOR.*

WHO is the happy Warrior ? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be ?
It is the generous Spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his childish
thought :

Whose high endeavours are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright :
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to
learn ;

Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care ;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain,
And Fear, and Bloodshed, miserable train !
Turns his necessity to glorious gain ;
In face of these doth exercise a power
Which is our human nature's highest dower ;
Controls them and subdues, transmutes, be-
reaves

Of their bad influence, and their good receives ;
By objects, which might force the soul to abate
Her feeling, rendered more compassionate ;
Is placable—because occasions rise
So often that demand such sacrifice ;
More skilful in self-knowledge, even more pure,
As tempted more ; more able to endure,
As more exposed to suffering and distress ;
Thence, also, more alive to tenderness.
'Tis he whose law is reason ; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends ;
Whence, in a state where men are tempted still
To evil for a guard against worse ill,
And what in quality or act is best
Doth seldom on a right foundation rest,
He fixes good on good alone, and owes
To virtue every triumph that he knows ;
Who, if he rise to station of command,
Rises by open means ; and there will stand
On honourable terms, or else retire,
And in himself possess his own desire ;
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim ;
And therefore does not stoop, nor lie in wait
For wealth, or honours, or for worldly state ;
Whom they must follow ; on whose head must
fall,
Like showers of manna, if they come at all :
Whose powers shed round him in the common
strife,

Or mild concerns of ordinary life,
A constant influence, a peculiar grace ;
But who, if he be called upon to face
Some awful moment to which Heaven has
joined

Great issues, good or bad for human kind,
Is happy as a Lover ; and attired
With sudden brightness, like a Man inspired ;
And, through the heat of conflict, keeps the
law

In calmness made, and sees what he foresaw ;
Or if an unexpected call succeed,
Come when it will, is equal to the need :
He who, though thus endued as with a sense
And faculty for storm and turbulence,
Is yet a Soul whose master-bias leans
To home-felt pleasures and to gentle scenes ;
Sweet images ! which, wheresoe'er he be,
Are at his heart ; and such fidelity
It is his darling passion to approve ;
More brave for this, that he hath much to
love :—

'Tis, finally, the Man, who, lifted high
Conspicuous object in a Nation's eye,
Or left unthought-of in obscurity,—
Who, with a toward or untoward lot,
Prosperous or adverse, to his wish or not,
Plays, in the many games of life, that one
Where what he most doth value must be won :
Whom neither shape of danger can dismay,

Nor thought of tender happiness betray ;
Who, not content that former worth stand fast,
Looks forward, persevering to the last,
From well to better, daily self-surpast :
Who, whether praise of him must walk the
earth

For ever, and to noble deeds give birth,
Or he must go to dust without his fame,
And leave a dead unprofitable name,
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause ;
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause :
This is the happy Warrior ; this is He
Whom every Man in arms should wish to be.

1806.



A COMPLAINT.

THERE is a change—and I am poor ;
Your love hath been, not long ago,
A fountain at my fond heart's door,
Whose only business was to flow ;
And flow it did ; not taking heed
Of its own bounty, or my need.

What happy moments did I count !
Blest was I then all bliss above !
Now, for that consecrated fount
Of murmuring, sparkling, living love,

What have I ? shall I dare to tell ?
A comfortless and hidden well.

A well of love—it may be deep—
I trust it is,—and never dry :
What matter ? if the waters sleep
In silence and obscurity.
Such change, and at the very door
Of my fond heart, hath made me poor.

1806.



STRAY PLEASURES.

*" Pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts, to be claimed by whoever shall find."*

By their floating mill,
That lies dead and still,
Behold yon Prisoners three,
The Miller with two Dames, on the breast
of the Thames !
The platform is small, but gives room for
them all ;
And they're dancing merrily.

From the shore come the notes
To their mill where it floats,
To their house and their mill tethered fast ;
To the small wooden isle where, their work to
beguile,

They from morning to even take whatever is
given ;—
And many a blithe day they have past.

In sight of the spires,
All alive with the fires
Of the sun going down to his rest,
In the broad open eye of the solitary sky,
They dance,—there are three, as jocund as
free,
While they dance on the calm river's breast.

Men and Maidens wheel,
They themselves make the reel,
And their music's a prey which they seize ;
It plays not for them,—what matter? 'tis
theirs ;
And if they had care, it has scattered their
cares,
While they dance, crying, "Long as ye
please !"

They dance not for me,
Yet mine is their glee !
Thus pleasure is spread through the earth
In stray gifts, to be claimed by whoever shall
find ;
Thus a rich loving-kindness, redundantly kind,
Moves all nature to gladness and mirth.

The showers of the spring
Rouse the birds, and they sing;
If the wind do but stir for his proper delight,
Each leaf, that and this, his neighbour will
kiss;
Each wave, one and t'other, speeds after his
brother;
They are happy, for that is their right!
1806.



THE ECHO.

YES, it was the mountain Echo,
Solitary, clear, profound,
Answering to the shouting Cuckoo,
Giving to her sound for sound.

Unsolicited reply
To a babbling wanderer sent;
Like her ordinary cry,
Like—but oh, how different!

Hears not also mortal Life?
Hear not we unthinking Creatures!
Slaves of folly, love, and strife,
Voices of two different natures?

Have not *we* too?—yes, we have
Answers, and we know not whence;

Echoes from beyond the grave,
Recognised intelligence ?

Such rebounds our inward ear
Catches sometimes from afar ;—
Listen, ponder, hold them dear ;
For of God,—of God they are.

1806.



LINES

Composed at Grasmere, during a walk, one evening,
after a stormy day, the author having just read in
a newspaper that the dissolution of Mr. Fox was
hourly expected.

LOUD is the Vale ! the Voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are
gone,
A mighty unison of streams !
Of all her Voices, One !

Loud is the Vale ;—this inland Depth,
In peace is roaring like the Sea ;
Yon star upon the mountain-top
Is listening quietly.

Sad was I, even to pain deprest,
Importunate and heavy load !
The Comforter hath found me here,
Upon this lonely road ;

And many thousands now are sad—
Wait the fulfilment of their fear ;
For he must die who is their stay,
Their glory disappear.

A Power is passing from the earth
To breathless Nature's dark abyss ;
But when the great and good depart
What is it more than this—

That Man, who is from God sent forth,
Doth yet again to God return ?
Such ebb and flow must ever be ;
Then wherefore should we mourn ?

1806.



ODE.

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD.

“ The child is father of the man ;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.”

I.

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and
stream,
The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore ;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see
no more.

II.

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose ;
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare ;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair ;
The sunshine is a glorious birth ;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the
earth.

III.

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief :
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong :
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the
steep,

No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains
throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou
happy Shepherd boy!

IV.

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.
Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling,
On every side,
In a thousand valleys, far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines
warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm:—

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear !
But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat :
Whither is fled the visionary gleam ?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream ?

v.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home :
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily farthest from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own ;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And even with something of a Mother's mind,
 And no unworthy aim,
 The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her foster-child, her inmate man,
 Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII.

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size !
See where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes !
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learned art ;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral ;
 And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song :
 Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife ;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride

The little Actor cons another part ;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage ;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

VIII.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy Soul's immensity ;
Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal
 deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind,—
 Mighty Prophet ! Seer blest !
 On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave ;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by ;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife ?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly
 freight,

And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life !

IX.

O joy ! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive !
The thought of our past years in me doth
breed
Perpetual benediction : not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest ;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his
breast :—
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise ;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings ;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised :
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,

Are yet a master light of all our seeing ;
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to
 make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence : truths that wake
 To perish never ;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
 Nor Man, nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy !
 Hence, in a season of calm weather,
 Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
 Which brought us hither,
 Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X.

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song !
 And let the young Lambs bound
 As to the tabor's sound !
We in thought will join your throng,
 Ye that pipe and ye that play,
 Ye that through your hearts to-day
 Feel the gladness of the May !
What though the radiance which was once so
 bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,

Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the
flower ;

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind ;
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be,
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering,
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI.

And O ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and
Groves,

Think not of any severing of our loves !

Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might :

I only have relinquished one delight

To live beneath your more habitual sway.

I love the Brooks which down their channels
fret,

Even more than when I tripped lightly as
they ;

The innocent brightness of a new-born Day

Is lovely yet ;

The Clouds that gather round the setting sun

Do take a sober colouring from an eye

That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality ;

Another race hath been, and other palms are
won.

Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

1806.

GIPSIES.

YET are they here the same unbroken knot
Of human Beings, in the self-same spot !
 Men, women, children, yea, the frame
 Of the whole spectacle the same !
Only their fire seems bolder, yielding light,
Now deep and red, the colouring of night ;
 That on their Gipsy-faces falls,
 Their bed of straw and blanket-walls.
Twelve hours, twelve bounteous hours, are
 gone, while I
Have been a traveller under open sky,
 Much witnessing of change and cheer,
 Yet as I left I find them here !
The weary Sun betook himself to rest,
Then issued Vesper from the fulgent west,
 Outshining like a visible God
 The glorious path in which he trod.
And now, ascending, after one dark hour
And one night's diminution of her power,

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY ART." 187

Behold the mighty Moon! this way
She looks as if at them—but they
Regard not her :—oh better wrong and strife,
(By nature transient) than this torpid life ;
The silent heavens have goings on :
The stars have tasks—but these have
none !
Yet witness all that stirs in heaven or earth !
In scorn I speak it not ;—they are what their
birth
And breeding suffer them to be ;
Wild outcasts of society !

1807.

~~—~~

"O NIGHTINGALE! THOU SURELY
ART."

O NIGHTINGALE ! thou surely art
A creature of a fiery heart :—
These notes of thine—they pierce and
pierce ;
Tumultuous harmony and fierce !
Thou sing'st as if the God of wine
Had helped thee to a Valentine ;
A song in mockery and despite
Of shades, and dews, and silent night ;
And steady bliss, and all the loves
Now sleeping in these peaceful groves.

I heard a Stock-dove sing or say
His homely tale this very day ;
His voice was buried among trees,
Yet to be come-at by the breeze ;
He did not cease ; but cooed—and cooed
And somewhat pensively he wooed :
He sang of love, with quiet blending,
Slow to begin, and never ending ;
Of serious faith, and inward glee ;
That was the song—the song for me !

1807.



*SONG AT THE FEAST OF BROUGHAM
CASTLE,*

UPON THE RESTORATION OF LORD CLIFFORD, THE
SHEPHERD, TO THE ESTATES AND HONOURS
OF HIS ANCESTORS.

HIGH in the breathless Hall the Minstrel sate,
And Emont's murmur mingled with the Song.—
The words of ancient time I thus translate,
A festal strain that hath been silent long :—

“From town to town, from tower to tower,
The red rose is a gladsome flower.
Her thirty years of winter past,
The red rose is revived at last ;
She lifts her head for endless spring,
For everlasting blossoming :

Both roses flourish, red and white.
In love and sisterly delight
The two that were at strife are blended,
And all old troubles now are ended.—
Joy ! joy to both ! but most to her
Who is the flower of Lancaster !
Behold her how she smiles to-day
On this great throng, this bright array !
Fair greeting doth she send to all
From every corner of the hall ;
But chiefly from above the board
Where sits in state our rightful lord,
A Clifford to his own restored !

“ They came with banner, spear, and shield ;
And it was proved in Bosworth-field.
Not long the Avenger was withstood—
Earth helped him with the cry of blood :
St. George was for us, and the might
Of blessed Angels crowned the right.
Loud voice the Land has uttered forth,
We loudest in the faithful north :
Our fields rejoice, our mountains ring,
Our streams proclaim a welcoming ;
Our strong abodes and castles see
The glory of their loyalty.

“ How glad is Skipton at this hour—
Though she is but a lonely Tower !
To vacancy and silence left ;

Of all her guardian sons bereft—
Knight, squire, or yeoman, page or groom,
We have them at the feast of Brough'm.
How glad Pendragon—though the sleep
Of years be on her!—She shall reap
A taste of this great pleasure, viewing
As in a dream her own renewing.
Rejoiced is Brough, right glad I deem
Beside her little humble stream ;
And she that keepeth watch and ward
Her statelier Eden's course to guard ;
They both are happy at this hour,
Though each is but a lonely Tower :—
But here is perfect joy and pride
For one fair house by Emont's side,
This day distinguished without peer
To see her Master and to cheer
Him, and his Lady-mother dear !

“ Oh ! it was a time forlorn
When the fatherless was born—
Give her wings that she may fly,
Or she sees her infant die !
Swords that are with slaughter wild
Hunt the Mother and the Child.
Who will take them from the light ?
Yonder is a man in sight—
Yonder is a house—but where ?
No, they must not enter there.
To the caves, and to the brooks,

To the clouds of heaven she looks ;
She is speechless, but her eyes
Pray in ghostly agonies.
Blissful Mary, Mother mild,
Maid and Mother undefiled,
Save a Mother and her Child !

“ Now Who is he that bounds with joy
On Carrock's side, a Shepherd boy ?
No thoughts hath he but thoughts that pass
Light as the wind along the grass.
Can this be He who hither came
In secret, like a smothered flame ?
O'er whom such thankful tears were shed
For shelter, and a poor man's bread !
God loves the Child ; and God hath willed
That those dear words should be fulfilled,
The Lady's words, when forced away,
The last she to her Babe did say,
' My own, my own, thy fellow-guest
I may not be ; but rest thee, rest,
For lowly shepherd's life is best !'

“ Alas ! when evil men are strong
No life is good, no pleasure long.
The Boy must part from Mosedale's groves,
And leave Blencathara's rugged coves,
And quit the flowers that summer brings
To Glenderamakin's lofty springs ;
Must vanish, and his careless cheer

Be turned to heaviness and fear.
Give Sir Lancelot Threlkeld praise !
Hear it, good man, old in days !
Thou tree of covert and of rest
For this young Bird that is distress ;
Among thy branches safe he lay,
And he was free to sport and play,
When falcons were abroad for prey.

“ A recreant harp, that sings of fear
And heaviness in Clifford's ear !
I said, when evil men are strong,
No life is good, no pleasure long,
A weak and cowardly untruth !
Our Clifford was a happy Youth,
And thankful through a weary time,
That brought him up to manhood's prime.
Again he wanders forth at will,
And tends a flock from hill to hill :
His garb is humble ; ne'er was seen
Such garb with such a noble mien ;
Among the shepherd grooms no mate
Hath he, a Child of strength and state !
Yet lacks not friends for solemn glee,
And a cheerful company,
That learned of him submissive ways ;
And comforted his private days.
To his side the fallow-deer
Came, and rested without fear ;
The eagle, lord of land and sea,

Stooped down to pay him fealty ;
And both the undying fish that swim
Through Bowscale-Tarn did wait on him.
The pair were servants of his eye
In their immortality ;
They moved about in open sight,
To and fro, for his delight.
He knew the rocks which Angels haunt
On the mountains visitant ;
He hath kenned them taking wing ;
And the caves where faeries sing
He hath entered ; and been told
By Voices how men lived of old.
Among the heavens his eye can see
Face of thing that is to be ;
And, if men report him right,
He could whisper words of might.
Now another day is come,
Fitter hope, and nobler doom :
He hath thrown aside his crook,
And hath buried deep his book ;
Armour rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls ;—
'Quell the Scot,' exclaims the lance—
Bear me to the heart of France,
Is the longing of the Shield—
Tell thy name, thou trembling Field ;
Field of Death, where'er thou be,
Groan thou with our victory !
Happy day, and mighty hour,
(50)

When our Shepherd, in his power,
Mailed and horsed, with lance and sword,
To his ancestors restored,
Like a re-appearing Star,
Like a glory from afar,
First shall head the flock of war ! ”

Alas ! the fervent harper did not know
That for a tranquil soul the lay was framed,
Who, long compelled in humble walks to go,
Was softened into feeling, soothed, and tamed.

Love had he found in huts where poor men lie ;
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

In him the savage virtue of the Race,
Revenge, and all ferocious thoughts were dead :
Nor did he change ; but kept in lofty place
The wisdom which adversity had bred.

Glad were the vales, and every cottage-hearth ;
The Shepherd lord was honoured more and
more :

And, ages after he was laid in earth,
“ The good Lord Clifford ” was the name he
bore.

*CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHILD
THREE YEARS OLD.*

LOVING she is, and tractable, though wild ;
And Innocence hath privilege in her
To dignify arch looks and laughing eyes ;
And feats of cunning ; and the pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to provoke
Mock-chastisement and partnership in play.
And, as a faggot sparkles on the hearth,
Not less if unattended and alone
Than when both young and old sit gathered
round

And take delight in its activity,
Even so this happy Creature of herself
Is all-sufficient ; solitude to her
Is blithe society, who fills the air
With gladness and involuntary songs.
Light are her sallies as the tripping fawn's
Forth-startled from the fern where she lay
couched ;

Unthought of, unexpected, as the stir
Of the soft breeze ruffling the meadow-flowers ;
Or from before it chasing wantonly
The many-coloured images impressed
Upon the bosom of a placid lake.

LAODAMIA.

“WITH sacrifice before the rising morn
Performed, my slaughtered Lord have I re-
quired ;
And in thick darkness, amid shades forlorn,
Him of the infernal Gods have I desired :
Celestial pity I again implore ;—
Restore him to my sight—great Jove, restore !”

So speaking, and by fervent love endowed
With faith, the Suppliant heavenward lifts her
hands ;
While, like the sun emerging from a cloud,
Her countenance brightens—and her eye ex-
pands ;
Her bosom heaves and spreads, her stature
grows ;
And she expects the issue in repose.

O terror ! what hath she perceived ?—O joy !
What doth she look on ?—whom doth she
behold ?

Her Hero slain upon the beach of Troy ?
His vital presence—his corporeal mould ?
It is—if sense deceive her not—’tis he !
And a God leads him—wingèd Mercury !

Mild Hermes spake—and touched her with
his wand

That calms all fear : " Such grace hath crowned
thy prayer,
Laodamia ! that at Jove's command
Thy Husband walks the paths of upper air :
He comes to tarry with thee three hours'
space ;
Accept the gift—behold him face to face ! "

Forth sprang the impassioned Queen her Lord
to clasp !
Again that consummation she essayed ;
But unsubstantial Form eludes her grasp
As often as that eager grasp was made.
The Phantom parts—but parts to reunite,
And re-assume his place before her sight.

" Protesilaus, lo ! thy guide is gone !
Confirm, I pray, the vision with thy voice :
This is our palace,—yonder is thy throne :
Speak, and the floor thou tread'st on will
rejoice.
Not to appal me have the gods bestowed
This precious boon,—and blest a sad abode."

" Great Jove, Laodamia ! doth not leave
His gifts imperfect :—spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive ;
But in reward of thy fidelity.
And something also did my worth obtain ;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain.

"Thou knowest, the Delphic oracle foretold
That the first Greek who touched the Trojan
strand

Should die ; but me the threat could not with-
hold :

A generous cause a victim did demand ;
And forth I leapt upon the sandy plain ;
A self-devoted chief—by Hector slain."

"Supreme of Heroes—bravest, noblest, best !
Thy matchless courage I bewail no more,
Which then, when tens of thousands were
deprest

By doubt, propelled thee to the fatal shore ;
Thou found'st—and I forgive thee—here thou
art—

A nobler counsellor than my poor heart.

"But thou, though capable of sternest deed,
Wert kind as resolute, and good as brave ;
And he, whose power restores thee, hath
decreed

That thou shouldst cheat the malice of the
grave ;

Redundant are thy locks, thy lips as fair
As when their breath enriched Thessalian
air.

"No Spectre greets me,—no vain Shadow
this :

Come, blooming Hero, place thee by my side !
Give, on this well-known couch, one nuptial
kiss

To me, this day, a second time thy bride !”
Jove frowned in heaven ; the conscious Parcæ
threw

Upon those roseate lips a Stygian hue.

“ This visage tells thee that my doom is past :
Know, virtue were not virtue, if the joys
Of sense were able to return as fast
And surely as they vanish.—Earth destroys
Those raptures duly—Erebus disdains :
Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains.

“ Be taught, O faithful Consort, to control
Rebellious passion : for the Gods approve
The depth, and not the tumult, of the soul ;
A fervent, not ungovernable love.
Thy transports moderate ; and meekly mourn
When I depart, for brief is my sojourn—”

“ Ah, wherefore ?—Did not Hercules by force
Wrest from the guardian Monster of the tomb
Alcestis, a reanimated corse
Given back to dwell on earth in vernal bloom ?
Medea’s spells dispersed the weight of years,
And Æson stood a youth ’mid youthful peers.

“ The Gods to us are merciful—and they
Yet further may relent : for mightier far

Than strength of nerve and sinew, or the sway
Of magic potent over sun and star,
Is love, though oft to agony distrest,
And though his favourite seat be feeble
woman's breast.

"But if thou goest I follow—" "Peace!" he
said—

She looked upon him and was calmed and
cheered ;

The ghastly colour from his lips had fled ;
In his deportment, shape, and mien, appeared
Elysian beauty, melancholy grace,
Brought from a pensive, though a happy place.

He spake of love, such love as Spirits feel
In worlds whose course is equable and pure ;
No fears to beat away—no strife to heal—
The past unsighed for, and the future sure ;
Spake of heroic arts in graver mood
Revived, with finer harmony pursued :

Of all that is most beauteous—imaged there
In happier beauty ; more pellucid streams,
An ampler ether, a diviner air,
And fields invested with purpureal gleams ;
Climes which the sun, who sheds the brightest
day
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

Yet there the Soul shall enter which hath
earned
That privilege by virtue.—“ Ill,” said he,
“ The end of man’s existence I discerned,
Who from ignoble games and revelry
Could draw, when we had parted, vain delight
While tears were thy best pastime,—day and
night :

“ And while my youthful peers, before my eyes
(Each hero following his peculiar bent),
Prepared themselves for glorious enterprise
By martial sports,—or, seated in the tent,
Chieftains and kings in council were detained ;
What time the fleet at Aulis lay enchained.

“ The wished-for wind was given :—I then
revolved
The oracle, upon the silent sea ;
And, if no worthier led the way, resolved
That, of a thousand vessels, mine should be
The foremost prow in pressing to the strand,—
Mine the first blood that tinged the Trojan
sand.

“ Yet bitter, oft-times bitter, was the pang
When of thy loss I thought, belovèd Wife !
On thee too fondly did my memory hang,
And on the joys we shared in mortal life,—

The paths which we had trod—these fountains
—flowers ;
My new-planned cities, and unfinished towers.

“ But should suspense permit the Foe to cry,
‘ Behold, they tremble !—haughty their array,
Yet of their number no one dares to die !’—
In soul I swept the indignity away .
Old frailties then recurred :—but lofty thought,
In act embodied, my deliverance wrought.

“ And Thou, though strong in love, art all too
weak
In reason, in self-government too slow ;
I counsel thee by fortitude to seek
Our blest re-union in the shades below.
The invisible world with thee hath sympathised ;
Be thy affections raised and solemnised.

“ Learn by a mortal yearning to ascend
Towards a higher object.—Love was given,
Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for that end :
For this the passion to excess was driven—
That self might be annulled : her bondage
prove
The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.”

Aloud she shrieked ! for Hermes re-appears :
Round the dear Shade she would have clung
—’tis vain.

The hours are past—too brief had they been
years ;
And him no mortal effort can detain :
Swift, toward the realms that know not earthly
day,
He through the portal takes his silent way,
And on the palace floor a lifeless corpse She lay.

Ah, judge her gently who so deeply loved !
Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,
Was in a trance of passion thus removed ;
Delivered from the galling yoke of time
And these frail elements—to gather flowers
Of blissful quiet 'mid unfading bowers.

Yet tears to human suffering are due ;
And mortal hopes defeated and o'erthrown
Are mourned by man, and not by man alone,
As fondly he believes.—Upon the side
Of Hellespont (such faith was entertained)
A knot of spiry trees for ages grew
From out the tomb of him for whom she died ;
And ever, when such stature they had gained
That Ilium's walls were subject to their view,
The trees' tall summits withered at the sight ;
A constant interchange of growth and blight !



YARROW VISITED.

SEPTEMBER, 1814.

AND is this—Yarrow?—*This* the stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream?
An image that hath perished!
Oh, that some Minstrel's harp were near,
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air,
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why?—A silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed, in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender hazy brightness,
Mild dawn of promise! that excludes
All profitless dejection;
Though not unwilling here to admit
A pensive recollection.

Where was it that the famous Flower
Of Yarrow Vale lay bleeding ?
His bed perchance was yon smooth mound
On which the herd is feeding :
And haply from this crystal pool,
Now peaceful as the morning,
The Water-wraith ascended thrice—
And gave his doleful warning.

Delicious is the Lay that sings
The haunts of happy Lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers :
And Pity sanctifies the Verse
That paints, by strength of sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of love ;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow !

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation :
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy ;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

That region left, the vale unfolds
Rich groves of lofty stature,
With Yarrow winding through the pomp
Of cultivated nature ;

And, rising from those lofty groves,
Behold a Ruin hoary !
The shattered front of Newark's towers
Renowned in Border story.

Fair scenes for childhood's opening bloom,
For sportive youth to stray in ;
For manhood to enjoy his strength ;
And age to wear away in !
Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts that nestle there,
The brood of chaste affection.

How sweet, on this autumnal day,
The wild-wood fruits to gather,
And on my True-love's forehead plant
A crest of blooming heather !
And what if I enwreathed my own !
'Twere no offence to reason ;
The sober Hills thus deck their brows
To meet the wintry season.

I see—but not by sight alone,
Loved Yarrow, have I won thee !
A ray of fancy still survives—
Her sunshine plays upon thee !
Thy ever youthful waters keep
A course of lively pleasure ;
And gladsome notes my lips can breathe
According to the measure.

The vapours linger round the Heights,
They melt—and soon must vanish ;
One hour is theirs, no more is mine—
Sad thought, which I would banish,
But that I know where'er I go,
Thy genuine image, Yarrow !
Will dwell with me to heighten joy,
And cheer my mind in sorrow.

1814.



TO —,

ON HER FIRST ASCENT TO THE SUMMIT OF
HELVELLYN.

INMATE of a mountain-dwelling,
Thou hast clomb aloft, and gazed,
From the watch-towers of Helvellyn;
Awed, delighted, and amazed !

Potent was the spell that bound thee,
Not unwilling to obey ;
For blue Ether's arms, flung round thee,
Stilled the pantings of dismay.

Lo ! the dwindled woods and meadows !
What a vast abyss is there !
Lo ! the clouds, the solemn shadows,
And the glistenings—heavenly fair !

And a record of commotion
Which a thousand ridges yield ;
Ridge, and gulf, and distant ocean
Gleaming like a silver shield !

Maiden ! now take flight ;—inherit
Alps or Andes—they are thine !
With the morning's roseate Spirit,
Sweep their length of snowy line ;

Or survey their bright dominions
In the gorgeous colours drest,
Flung from off the purple pinions,
Evening spreads throughout the west !

Thine are all the choral fountains
Warbling in each starry vault
Of the untrodden lunar mountains ;
Listen to their songs !—or halt,

To Niphates' top invited
Whither spiteful Satan steered ;
Or descend where the ark alighted
When the green earth re-appeared ;

For the power of hills is on thee,
As was witnessed through thine eye
Then, when old Helvellyn won thee
To confess their majesty !

THE LONGEST DAY.

ADDRESSED TO —.

LET us quit the leafy arbour,
And the torrent murmuring by :
For the sun is in his harbour,
Weary of the open sky.

Evening now unbinds the fetters
Fashioned by the glowing light ;
All that breathe are thankful debtors
To the harbinger of night.

Yet by some grave thoughts attended
Eve renews her calm career ;
For the day that now is ended
Is the longest of the year.

Laura ! sport, as now thou sportest,
On this platform, light and free ;
Take thy bliss, while longest, shortest,
Are indifferent to thee !

Who would check the happy feeling
That inspires the linnet's song ?
Who would stop the swallow, wheeling
On her pinions swift and strong ?

Yet at this impressive season,
Words which tenderness can speak
From the truths of homely reason,
Might exalt the loveliest cheek ;

And, while shades to shades succeeding
Steal the landscape from the sight,
I would urge this moral pleading,
Last forerunner of "Good night !"

SUMMER ebbs ;—each day that follows
Is a reflux from on high,
Tending to the darksome hollows
Where the frosts of winter lie.

He who governs the creation,
In His providence, assigned
Such a gradual declination
To the life of human kind.

Yet we mark it not ;—fruits redden,
Fresh flowers blow, as flowers have blown,
And the heart is loth to deaden
Hopes that she so long hath known.

Be thou wiser, youthful Maiden !
And when thy decline shall come,
Let not flowers, or boughs fruit-laden,
Hide the knowledge of thy doom.

Now, even now, ere wrapped in slumber,
Fix thine eyes upon the sea
That absorbs time, space, and number
Look thou to Eternity !

Follow thou the flowing river
On whose breast are thither borne
All deceived, and each deceiver,
Through the gates of night and morn ;

Through the year's successive portals ;
Through the bounds which many a star
Marks, not mindless of frail mortals,
When his light returns from far.

Thus when thou with Time hast travelled
Towards the mighty gulf of things,
And the mazy stream unravelled
With thy best imaginings :

Think, if thou on beauty leanest,
Think how pitiful that stay,
Did not virtue give the meanest
Charms superior to decay.

Duty, like a strict preceptor,
Sometimes frowns, or seems to frown ;
Choose her thistle for thy sceptre,
While youth's roses are thy crown.

Grasp it,—if thou shrink and tremble,
Fairest damsel of the green,
Thou wilt lack the only symbol
That proclaims a genuine queen ;

And insures those palms of honour
Which selected spirits wear,
Bending low before the Donor,
Lord of heaven's unchanging year !

THE PASS OF KIRKSTONE.

I.

WITHIN the mind strong fancies work,
A deep delight the bosom thrills,
Oft as I pass along the fork
Of these fraternal hills :
Where, save the rugged road, we find
No appanage of human kind ;
Nor hint of man ; if stone or rock
Seem not his handy-work to mock
By something cognizably shaped ;
Mockery—or model roughly hewn,
And left as if by earthquake strewn,
Or from the flood escaped :—
Altars for Druid service fit ;
(But where no fire was ever lit,
Unless the glow-worm to the skies
Thence offer nightly sacrifice)
Wrinkled Egyptian monument ;
Green moss-grown tower ; or hoary tent ;
Tents of a camp that never shall be raised ;
On which four thousand years have gazed !

II.

Ye plough-shares sparkling on the slopes !
Ye snow-white lambs that trip
Imprisoned 'mid the formal props
Of restless ownership !

Ye trees, that may to-morrow fall
To feed the insatiate Prodigal !
Lawns, houses, chattels, groves, and fields,
All that the fertile valley shields ;
Wages of folly—baits of crime,—
Of life's uneasy game the stake,
Playthings that keep the eyes awake
Of drowsy, dotard Time ;—
O care ! O guilt !—O vales and plains,
Here, 'mid his own unvexed domains,
A genius dwells, that can subdue
At once all memory of you,—
Most potent when mists veil the sky,
Mists that distort and magnify ;
While the coarse rushes, to the sweeping breeze,
Sigh forth their ancient melodies !

III.

List to those shriller notes ! *that* march
Perchance was on the blast,
When, through this Height's inverted arch,
Rome's earliest legion passed !
They saw, adventurously impelled,
And older eyes than theirs beheld,
This block—and yon, whose church-like frame
Gives to the savage pass its name.
Aspiring road ! that lov'st to hide
Thy daring in a vapoury bourn,
Not seldom may the hour return
When thou shalt be my guide ;

And I (as often we find cause,
When life is at a weary pause,
And we have panted up the hill
Of duty with reluctant will)
Be thankful, even though tired and faint,
For the rich bounties of constraint ;
Whence oft invigorating transports flow
That choice lacked courage to bestow.

IV.

My soul was grateful for delight
That wore a threatening brow ;
A veil is lifted—can she slight
The scene that opens now !
Though habitation none appear,
The greenness tells, man must be there ;
The shelter—that the perspective
Is of the clime in which we live ;
Where Toil pursues his daily round ;
Where Pity sheds sweet tears, and Love,
In woodbine bower or birchen grove,
Inflicts his tender wound.
Who comes not hither ne'er shall know
How beautiful the world below ;
Nor can he guess how lightly leaps
The brook adown the rocky steeps.
Farewell, thou desolate Domain !
Hope, pointing to the cultured plain,
Carols like a shepherd-boy ;
And who is she ?—Can that be Joy !

Who, with a sunbeam for her guide,
Smoothly skims the meadows wide ;
While Faith from yonder opening cloud
To hill and vale proclaims aloud,
"Whate'er the weak may dread, the wicked
dare,
Thy lot, O Man, is good, thy portion fair !"
1817.



*"HOPES, WHAT ARE THEY?—BEADS
OF MORNING."*

HOPES, what are they?—Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass ;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

What are fears but voices airy?
Whispering harm where harm is not ;
And deluding the unwary
Till the fatal bolt is shot !

What is glory?—in the socket
See how dying tapers fare !
What is pride?—a whizzing rocket
That would emulate a star.

What is friendship?—do not trust her,
Nor the vows which she has made ;
Diamonds dart their brightest lustre
From a palsy-shaken head.

What is truth?—a staff rejected ;
Duty?—an unwelcome clog ;
Joy?—a moon by fits reflected
In a swamp or watery bog ;
Bright, as if through ether steering,
To the Traveller's eye it shone :
He hath hailed it re-appearing—
And as quickly it is gone ;
Gone, as if for ever hidden ;
Or mis-shapen to the sight,
And by sullen weeds forbidden
To resume its native light.
What is youth?—a dancing billow,
(Winds behind, and rocks before !)
Age?—a drooping, tottering willow
On a flat and lazy shore.
What is peace?—when pain is over,
And love ceases to rebel,
Let the last faint sigh discover
That precedes the passing knell !

1818.

*EVENING ODE,*

COMPOSED UPON AN EVENING OF EXTRAORDINARY
SPLENDOUR AND BEAUTY.

I.

HAD this effulgence disappeared
With flying haste, I might have sent,

Among the speechless clouds, a look
Of blank astonishment ;
But 'tis endued with power to stay,
And sanctify one closing day,
That frail Mortality may see—
What is ?—ah no, but what *can* be !
Time was when field and watery cove
With modulated echoes rang,
While choirs of fervent Angels sang
Their vespers in the grove ;
Or, ranged like stars along some sovereign height,
Warbled, for heaven above and earth below,
Strains suitable to both.—Such holy rite,
Methinks, if audibly repeated now
From hill or valley, could not move
Sublimèr transport, purer love,
Than doth this silent spectacle—the gleam—
The shadow—and the peace supreme !

II.

No sound is uttered,—but a deep
And solemn harmony pervades
The hollow vale from steep to steep,
And penetrates the glades.
Far-distant images draw nigh,
Called forth by wondrous potency
Of beamy radiance, that imbues
Whate'er it strikes, with gem-like hues !
In vision exquisitely clear,
Herds range along the mountain side ;

And glistening antlers are descried ;
And gilded flocks appear.
Thine is the tranquil hour, purpureal Eve !
But long as god-like wish, or hope divine,
Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe
That this magnificence is wholly thine !
From worlds not quickened by the sun
A portion of the gift is won ;
An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread
On ground which British shepherds tread !

III.

And, if there be whom broken ties
Afflict, or injuries assail,
Yon hazy ridges to their eyes
Present a glorious scale,
Climbing suffused with sunny air,
To stop—no record hath told where !
And tempting Fancy to ascend,
And with immortal Spirits blend !
Wings at my shoulder seem to play ;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise
Their practicable way.
Come forth, ye drooping old men, look abroad,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound !
And if some traveller, weary of his road,
Hath slept since noon-tide on the grassy ground,
Ye Genii ! to his covert speed ;
And wake him with such gentle heed

As may attune his soul to meet the dower
Bestowed on this transcendent hour !

IV.

Such hues from their celestial Urn
Were wont to stream before my eye,
Where'er it wandered in the morn
Of blissful infancy.
'This glimpse of glory, why renewed ?
Nay, rather speak with gratitude ;
For, if a vestige of those gleams
Survived, 'twas only in my dreams.
Dread Power ! whom peace and calmness serve
No less than Nature's threatening voice,
If aught unworthy be my choice,
From THEE if I would swerve,
Oh, let thy grace remind me of the light
Full early lost, and fruitlessly deplored ;
Which, at this moment, on my waking sight
Appears to shine, by miracle restored !
My soul, though yet confined to earth,
Rejoices in a second birth ;
'Tis past, the visionary splendour fades ;
And night approaches with her shades.

Note.—The multiplication of mountain ridges, described at the commencement of the third stanza of this ode, as a kind of Jacob's ladder, leading to Heaven, is produced either by watery vapours, or sunny haze ;—in the present instance, by the latter cause. Allusions to the ode entitled "Intimations of Immortality" pervade the last stanza of the foregoing poem.

SONNETS (MISCELLANEOUS).



I.

"PELION AND OSSA FLOURISH SIDE BY SIDE."

PELION and Ossa flourish side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled ;
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold ;
And that inspiring Hill which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old ;
While not an English mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in
crowds :
What was the great Parnassus' self to thee,
Mount Skiddaw ? In his natural sovereignty
Our British hill is nobler far : he shrouds
His double front among Atlantic clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than
Castaly.

II.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE,

SEPT. 3, 1803.

EARTH has not anything to show more fair :
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty :
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning ; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky ;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill ;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep ;
The river glideth at his own sweet will :
Dear God ! the very houses seem asleep ;
And all that mighty heart is lying still !

1802.

III.

“IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM
AND FREE.”

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free ;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration ; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity ;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea :

Listen ! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with His eternal motion make
A sound like thunder—everlastingly.
Dear Child ! dear Girl ! that walkest with me
here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine :
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year ;
And worship'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

1802.

IV.

PERSONAL TALK.

(Four Sonnets.)

I.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk,—
Of friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight :
And, for my chance-acquaintance, ladies bright,
Sons, mothers, maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with
chalk
Painted on rich men's floors for one feast
night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire ;

To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
By my half-kitchen, my half-parlour fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong.

2.

"YET life," you say, "is life ; we have seen
and see,

And with a living pleasure we describe ;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.

Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."

Even be it so : yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me !
Children are blest, and powerful ; their world lies
More justly balanced ; partly at their feet,
And part far from them ;—sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet ;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes,
He is a Slave ; the meanest we can meet !

3.

WINGS have we,—and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure : wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low.
Dreams, books, are each a world ; and books,
we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good :

An old place, full of many a lovely brood,
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers
in flocks ;
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like a bold Girl, who plays her agile pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mounte-
banks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's head,
and mocks
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think,
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

1806.

VII.

“THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US ; LATE
AND SOON.”

THE world is too much with us ; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers :
Little we see in Nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon ;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not.—Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less for-
lorn ;

Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea ;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

1806.

VIII.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one ; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring ; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky ;
By turns have all been thought of ; yet I lie
Sleepless, and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees ;
And the first cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep ! by any stealth :
So do not let me wear to-night away :
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth ?
Come, blessed barrier betwixt day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health !

1806.

IX.

TO SLEEP.

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee,
Sleep !
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names ;

The very sweetest words that fancy frames
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep !
Dear Bosom-child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering ; Balm that tames
All anguish ; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost ?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most !

1806.

X.

TO LADY BEAUMONT.

LADY ! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was shaping beds for winter flowers ;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall ; and still as Fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended
powers

I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, lady ! which your feet shall rove.
Yes ! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring ;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring
pines

Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of Spring.

1807.

XI.

UPON THE SIGHT OF A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE.

(Painted by Sir G. H. Beaumont, Bart.)

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could
stay

Yon cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape ;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day ;
Which stopped that band of travellers on their
way,

Ere they were lost within the shady wood ;
And showed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering bay.
Soul-soothing Art ! which Morning, Noontide,
Even,

Do serve with all their changeful pageantry ;
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

1811.

XII.

TO B. R. HAYDON, ESQ.

HIGH is our calling, Friend !—Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,

Or pencil pregnant with ethereal hues,) Demands the service of a mind and heart, Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part, Heroically fashioned—to infuse Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse, While the whole world seems adverse to desert. And oh ! when Nature sinks, as oft she may, Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress, Still to be strenuous for the bright reward, And in the soul admit of no decay, Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness— Great is the glory, for the strife is hard !

1815.

XIII.

NOVEMBER I.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow smooth as the sky
can shed,
Shines like another sun—on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching Night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would
tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering
head—
Terrestrial—but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullyng wing,
Unswapt, unstained ? Nor shall the aërial
Powers

Dissolve that beauty—destined to endure,
 White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
 Through all vicissitudes—till genial Spring
 Has filled the laughing vales with welcome
 flowers.

1815.

XIV.

“WEAK IS THE WILL OF MAN, HIS
 JUDGMENT BLIND.”

“WEAK is the will of Man, his judgment
 blind ;

Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays ;
 Heavy is woe ;—and joy, for human-kind,
 A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze !”

Thus might ~~he~~ paint our lot of mortal days
 Who wants the glorious faculty assigned
 To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
 And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.

Imagination is that sacred power,
 Imagination lofty and refined ;

'Tis hers to pluck the amaranthine flower
 Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples
 bind

Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest
 shower,

And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest
 wind.

1815.

XV.

"HAIL, TWILIGHT, SOVEREIGN OF ONE
PEACEFUL HOUR."

HAIL, Twilight, sovereign of one peaceful
hour !

Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night ;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. Ancient Power !
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains
lower,

To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was
seen

The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power ! brought
forth ;

These mighty barriers, and the gulf between ;
The flood,—the stars,—a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth !

1815.

XVI.

"BROOK ! WHOSE SOCIETY THE POET SEEKS."

BROOK ! whose society the Poet seeks
Intent his wasted spirits to renew ;

And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-
breaks ;

If wish were mine some type of thee to view,
Thee, and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears ; no Naiad shouldst thou be,—
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints nor
hairs ;

It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a safer good ;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

1815.

XVII.

“SURPRISED BY JOY—IMPATIENT AS THE
WIND.”

SURPRISED by joy—impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport—Oh ! with
whom

But Thee, deep buried in the silent tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find ?
Love, faithful love, recalled thee to my mind—
But how could I forget thee ?—Through what
power,

Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind

To my most grievous loss?—That thought's
return

Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no
more ;

That neither present time, nor years unborn,
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

1815.

XVIII.

GORDALE.

AT early dawn, or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy Eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave ;
Then, pensive Votary ! let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch ;—for so, by
leave

Of the propitious hour, thou mayst perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn
Recumbent. Him thou mayst behold, who
hides

His lineaments by day, yet there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn ;
Or, if need be, impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides !

1819.

XIX.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE
COMPLETE ANGLER."

WHILE flowing rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton ;—Sage benign !
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine.
Meek, nobly versed in simple discipline,
He found the longest summer day too short,
To his loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook !
Fairer than life itself, in this sweet Book,
The cowslip bank and shady willow-tree,
And the fresh meads ; where flowed from every
nook
Of his full bosom, gladsome Piety !

1819.

XX.

"GRIEF, THOU HAST LOST AN EVER-READY
FRIEND."

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever-ready friend
Now that the cottage Spinning-wheel is mute ;
And Care—a comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend ;
And Love—a charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows

From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse,—else troubled without end;
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously, to soothe her aching breast—
And—to a point of just relief—abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

1819.

XXI.

TO A SNOWDROP.

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows, and
white as they,

But hardier far, once more I see thee bend
Thy forehead, as if fearful to offend,
Like an unbidden guest. Though day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, waylay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend;
Yet art thou welcome, welcome as a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed

May

Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Nor will I then thy modest grace forget,
Chaste Snowdrop, venturous harbinger of
Spring,

And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

1819.

SONNETS TO LIBERTY.

I.

"I GRIEVED FOR BUONAPARTÈ."

I GRIEVED for Buonapartè, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! for, who aspires
To genuine greatness but from just desires,
And knowledge such as *he* could never gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her
knees :

Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly
walk

Of the mind's business : these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount ; this is the
stalk

True Power doth grow on ; and her rights are
these.

1802.

II.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR
CALAIS, AUGUST 1802.

FAIR star of evening, Splendour of the west,
Star of my Country!—on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom : yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldst be my Country's emblem ; and
 shouldst wink,
Bright Star ! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There ! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, that is England ; there she lies.
Blessings be on you both ! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory ! I, with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among men who do not love her, linger here.
1802.

III.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN
REPUBLIC.

ONCE did She hold the gorgeous East in fee ;
And was the safeguard of the West : the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.

She was a maiden City, bright and free ;
No guile seduced, no force could violate ;
And when she took unto herself a mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea !
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay ;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day :
Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

1802.

IV.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUSSAINT, the most unhappy man of men !
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den ;
O miserable chieftain ! where and when
Wilt thou find patience ? Yet die not ! do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow :
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee ; air, earth,
and skies :
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee ; thou hast great allies ;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

1802,

V.

SEPTEMBER, 1802.

INLAND, within a hollow vale, I stood ;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The coast of France, the coast of France how
near !

Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
Was like a lake, or river bright and fair,
A span of waters ; yet what power is there !
What mightiness for evil and for good !
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and waters
roll,

Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the soul
Only the Nations shall be great and free !

1802.

VI.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER 1802.

O FRIEND ! I know not which way I must
look

For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show ; mean handy-work of craftsman,
cook,

Or groom!—We must run glittering like a
brook

In the open sunshine, or we are unblest :
The wealthiest man among us is the best ;
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry ; and these we adore ;
Plain living and high thinking are no more ;
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone ; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

1802.

VII.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON ! thou shouldst be living at this hour :
England hath need of thee ; she is a fen
Of stagnant waters ; altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men ;
Oh ! raise us up, return to us again ;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart ;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness ; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

1802.

VIII.

"IT IS NOT TO BE THOUGHT OF THAT THE
FLOOD."

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which, to the open sea
Of the world's praise, from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters unwith-
stood,"

Roused though it be full often to a mood
Which spurns the check of salutary bands,
That this most famous Stream in bogs and
sands

Should perish ; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old :
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake : the faith and morals
hold

Which Milton held.—In everything we are
sprung

Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

1802.

IX.

"WHEN I HAVE BORNE IN MEMORY WHAT
HAS TAMED."

WHEN I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart

When men change swords for ledgers, and
desert

The student's bower for gold, some fears
unnamed

I had, my Country !—am I to be blamed ?

But when I think of thee, and what thou art,

Verily, in the bottom of my heart,

Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.

But dearly must we prize thee ; we who find

In thee a bulwark for the cause of men ;

And I by my affection was beguiled.

What wonder if a poet now and then,

Among the many movements of his mind,

Felt for thee as a lover or a child !

1802.

X.

TO THE MEN OF KENT. OCTOBER, 1803.

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye men of Kent,

Ye children of a Soil that doth advance

Her haughty brow against the coast of France,

Now is the time to prove your hardiment !

To France be words of invitation sent !

They from their fields can see the countenance

Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering
lance,

And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.

Left single, in bold parley, ye of yore

Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath ;

Confirmed the charters that were yours
before ;—

No parleying now ! In Britain is one breath ;
We all are with you now from shore to shore :
Ye men of Kent, 'tis victory or death !

1803.

XI.

ANTICIPATION. OCTOBER, 1803.

SHOUT, for a mighty victory is won !
On British ground the Invaders are laid low :
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like
snow,

And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again ! the work is done.
Come forth, ye old men, now in peaceful
show,

And greet your sons ! drums beat and trumpets
blow !

Make merry, wives ! ye little children, stun
Your grandames' ears with pleasure of your
noise !

Clap, infants, clap your hands ! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our brethren slain,
Had something in it which the heart enjoys :—
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

1803.

XII.

NOVEMBER, 1806.

ANOTHER year !—another deadly blow !
Another mighty Empire overthrown !
And we are left, or shall be left, alone ;
The last that dare to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well ! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought ;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought,
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer !
We shall exult, if they who rule the land
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant ; not a servile band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

1806.

XIII.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION
OF SWITZERLAND.

TWO voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty Voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty !
There came a tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fought'st against him ; but hast vainly
striven :

Thou from thy Alpine holds at length art
driven,

Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft ;
Then cleave, oh, cleave, to that which still is
left ;

For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That Mountain floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee !

1807.



SONNETS:
TOUR ON CONTINENT, 1820.

I.

FISH-WOMEN ON LANDING AT CALAIS.

'TIS said, fantastic ocean doth enfold
The likeness of whate'er on land is seen ;
But, if the Nereid Sisters and their Queen,
Above whose heads the tide so long hath
 rolled,
The Dames resemble whom we here behold,
How terrible beneath the opening waves
To sink, and meet them in their fretted caves,
Withered, grotesque—immeasurably old,
And shrill and fierce in accent !—Fear it not ;
For they Earth's fairest daughters do excel ;
Pure undecaying beauty is their lot ;
Their voices into liquid music swell,
Thrilling each pearly cleft and sparry grot—
The undisturbed abodes where Sea-nymphs
 dwell !

1820.

II.

BRUGES.

THE Spirit of Antiquity—enshrined
In sumptuous buildings, vocal in sweet song,
In picture, speaking with heroic tongue,
And with devout solemnities entwined—
Mounts to the seat of grace within the mind :
Hence Forms that glide with swan-like ease
along ;
Hence motions, even amid the vulgar throng,
To an harmonious decency confined ;
As if the streets were consecrated ground,
The city one vast temple—dedicate
To mutual respect in thought and deed ;
To leisure, to forbearances sedate ;
To social cares from jarring passions freed ;
A deeper peace than that in deserts found !

1820.

III.

SCENERY BETWEEN NAMUR AND LIÉGE.

WHAT lovelier home could gentle Fancy choose ?
Is this the stream, whose cities, heights, and
plains,
War's favourite playground, are with crimson
stains
Familiar, as the Morn with pearly dew ?
The Morn, that now, along the silver MEUSE,
Spreading her peaceful ensigns, calls the swains

To tend their silent boats and ringing wains,
Or strip the bough whose mellow fruit bestrews
The ripening corn beneath it. As mine eyes
Turn from the fortified and threatening hill,
How sweet the prospect of yon watery glade,
With its grey rocks clustering in pensive shade,
That, shaped like old monastic turrets, rise
From the smooth meadow ground, serene and
still !

1820.

IV.

SKY-PROSPECT. FROM THE PLAIN OF
FRANCE.

Lo ! in the burning west, the craggy nape
Of a proud Ararat ! and, thereupon,
The Ark, her melancholy voyage done !
Yon rampant cloud mimics a lion's shape ;
There—combats a huge crocodile—agape
A golden spear to swallow ! and that brown
And massy grove, so near yon blazing town,
Stirs—and recedes—destruction to escape !
Yet all is harmless as the Elysian shades
Where Spirits dwell in undisturbed repose,
Silently disappears, or quickly fades ;—
Meek Nature's evening comment on the shows
That for oblivion take their daily birth
From all the fuming vanities of Earth !

1820.

DUDDON * SONNETS.



I.

CHILD of the clouds ! remote from every taint
Of sordid industry thy lot is cast ;
Thine are the honours of the lofty waste ;
Not seldom, when with heat the valleys faint,
Thy hand-maid Frost with spangled tissue quaint
Thy cradle decks ; to chant thy birth thou hast
No meaner Poet than the whistling Blast,
And Desolation is thy Patron-Saint !
She guards thee, ruthless Power ! who would
not spare
Those mighty forests, once the bison's screen,
Where stalked the huge deer to his shaggy
lair
Through paths and alleys roofed with sombre
green,
Thousands of years before the silent air
Was pierced by whizzing shaft of hunter keen !

1820.

* A river of the English Lake District.—Ed.

II.

SOLE listener, Duddon ! to the breeze that
played

With thy clear voice, I caught the fitful sound
Wafted o'er sullen moss and craggy mound,
Unfruitful solitudes, that seemed to upbraid
The sun in heaven !—but now, to form a shade
For thee, green alders have together wound
Their foliage ; ashes flung their arms around ;
And birch-trees risen in silver colonnade.
And thou hast also tempted here to rise,
'Mid sheltering pines, this Cottage rude and
grey ;

Whose ruddy children, by the mother's eyes
Carelessly watched, sport through the summer
day,

Thy pleased associates :—light as endless May
On Infant bosoms lonely Nature lies.

1820.

III.

FLOWERS.

ERE yet our course was graced with social trees
It lacked not old remains of hawthorn bowers,
Where small birds warbled to their paramours ;
And, earlier still, was heard the hum of bees ;
I saw them ply their harmless robberies,
And caught the fragrance which the sundry
flowers,

Fed by the stream with soft perpetual showers,
Plenteously yielded to the vagrant breeze.
There bloomed the strawberry of the wilderness;
The trembling eyebright showed her sapphire
blue,
The thyme her purple, like the blush of Even ;
And, if the breath of some to no caress
Invited, forth they peeped so fair to view,
All kinds alike seemed favourites of Heaven.

1820.

IV.

WHAT aspect bore the Man who roved or fled,
First of his tribe, to this dark dell—who first
In this pellucid Current slaked his thirst ?
What hopes came with him ? what designs
were spread
Along his path ? His unprotected bed
What dreams encompassed ? Was the in-
truder nursed
In hideous usages, and rites accursed,
That thinned the living and disturbed the dead ?
No voice replies ;—the earth, the air is mute ;
And Thou, blue Streamlet, murmuring yield'st
no more
Than a soft record that whatever fruit
Of ignorance thou mightst witness heretofore,
Thy function was to heal and to restore,
To soothe and cleanse, not madden and
pollute !

1820.

V.

O MOUNTAIN Stream ! the Shepherd and his Cct
Are privileged inmates of deep solitude ;
Nor would the nicest Anchorite exclude
A field or two of brighter green, or plot
Of tillage-ground, that seemeth like a spot
Of stationary sunshine :—thou hast viewed
These only, Duddon ! with their paths renewed
By fits and starts, yet this contents thee not.
Thee hath some awful Spirit impelled to leave,
Utterly to desert, the haunts of men,
Though simple thy companions were and few ;
And through this wilderness a passage cleave
Attended but by thy own voice, save when
The clouds and fowls of the air thy way pursue !
1807.

VI.

SEATHWAITE CHAPEL.

SACRED Religion, "mother of form and fear,"
Dread arbitress of mutable respect,
New rites ordaining, when the old are
wrecked,
Or cease to please the fickle worshipper ;
Mother of Love ! (that name best suits thee here)
Mother of Love ! for this deep vale, protect
Truth's holy lamp, pure source of bright effect,
Gifted to purge the vapoury atmosphere

That seeks to stifle it ;—as in those days
When this low Pile a Gospel Teacher knew,
Whose good works formed an endless retinue :
A Pastor such as Chaucer's verse pourtrays ;
Such as the Heaven-taught skill of Herbert drew ;
And tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless
praise !

1820.

VII.

THE PLAIN OF DONNERDALE.

THE old inventive Poets, had they seen,
Or rather felt, the entrancement that detains
Thy waters, Duddon ! 'mid these flowery
plains ;
The still repose, the liquid lapse serene,
Transferred to bowers imperishably green,
Had beautified Elysium ! But these chains
Will soon be broken ;—a rough course remains,
Rough as the past ; where Thou, of placid
mien,
Innocuous as a firstling of the flock,
And countenanced like a soft cerulean sky,
Shalt change thy temper ; and, with many a
shock
Given and received in mutual jeopardy,
Dance like a Bacchanal, from rock to rock,
Tossing her frantic thyrsus wide and high !

1820.

VIII.

RETURN, Content! for fondly I pursued,
Even when a child, the Streams—unheard,
unseen;
Through tangled woods, impending rocks between;
Or, free as air, with flying inquest viewed
The sullen reservoirs whence their bold brood,
Pure as the morning, fretful, boisterous, keen,
Green as the salt-sea billows, white and green,
Poured down the hills, a choral multitude!
Nor have I tracked their course for scanty
gains;
They taught me random cares and truant joys,
That shield from mischief and preserve from stains
Vague minds, while men are growing out of
boys;
Maturer Fancy owes to their rough noise
Impetuous thoughts that brook not servile reins.

1820.

IX.

AFTER-THOUGHT.

*I THOUGHT of Thee, my partner and my guide,
As being past away. Vain sympathies!
For, backward, Duddon! as I cast my eyes,*